CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

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India consumed **31.3 mn** tonnes LPG in 2024-25, but produced just **12.8 mn** tonnes domestically, importing the rest-mostly via Hormuz now sealed by Iran war.

33.1 cr
active household LPG consumers in India

50%
of total domestic LPG consumption comes from imports

18%
of total LPG sold is for commercial usage

1.6 cr
domestic connections are piped natural gas

MIDDLE EAST WAR RATTLES OIL MARKETS-INDIA BATTLES GAS SUPPLY CUT

FUEL FEARS: INDIA INVOKES ECA

The ongoing Middle East conflict has disrupted global oil and gas shipments; With the enforcement of Essential Commodities Act, Centre aims to prevent hoarding and ensure uninterrupted fuel supply; accords priority to natural gas for domestic use, transport, and essential operations; orders refineries to ramp up LPG production for households.

NEW DELHI

The Union Government has invoked the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, effective March 10, 2026, to ensure uninterrupted supply of LPG for domestic consumers amid West Asia conflict-related energy disruptions.

Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has issued specific directives to regulate the production and distribution of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and natural gas to ensure their availability for domestic and critical sectors. This simply means the oil refiningcompanies have been ordered to maximise production of LPG and makeit-available to domestic consumers only. The order invokes clauses 3 and 5 of the ECA, which also sets supply limits for Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs).

As the Act has been invoked now, all oil refining companies must maximise production of LPG using available propane and butane streams. Refiners are prohibited from diverting propane or butane for manufacturing petrochemical products or other downstream derivatives.

Public sector OMCs — IOCL, HPCL, and BPCL— must supply the procured LPG exclusively to domestic households. A new Natural Gas (Supply Regulation) Order, 2026 prioritises gas allocation to domestic PNG, CNG, and fertiliser plants.

To prevent hoarding, government has mandated a 25-days window for fresh cylinder bookings.

WHAT THIS MEANS

India has invoked emergency powers to redirect supplies of liquefied petroleum gas away from industrial users to households due to the Middle East war.

An oil ministry notification barred refiners and petrochemical plants from using LPG as a feedstock and ordered them to maximize LPG output.

The government safeguard-shouseholds receiving piped natural gas and the transport sector, and capping provisions to industries such as fertilizers and manufacturing.

FACTFILE

- The Act passed in 1955 to ensure essential goods are available at fair prices
- Allows the government to regulate supply, production and distribution of key commodities
- Covers items like food grains, edible oils, fertilisers, drugs and fuel
- Invoked five times since 2020 to control food prices and protect domestic supply.

Govt rejigs allocation, issues priority list

1. LPG, CNG, Pipred cooking gas.
2. Fertiliser sector.
3. Tea, manufacturing, other industries
4. Industrial & commercial consumers

What is Essential Commodities Act (ECA)?

The Essential Commodities Act (ECA), 1955 is a central legislation designed to ensure the delivery of specific goods whose supply, if obstructed by hoarding or black marketing or any other external factor. In 2020, the Indian Parliament amended the Act, restricting the Centre's authority to regulate cereals, pulses, potatoes, onions, edible oilseeds and oils only during situations like war, famine, or severe natural calamities. The Act empowers the government to regulate the production, supply, distribution, and pricing of these commodities to ensure they are available to consumers at fair prices in crucial times as well. The Central Government can add or remove items from the "Schedule" of the Act based on public interest. Since 2020, the Centre has invoked the ECA five times citing the need to control food prices and safeguard domestic supply.

POWERS GIVEN TO GOVT UNDER THE LAW

Section 3 of the Act has conferred upon the Central Government the authority to regulate the production, supply, and distribution of essential commodities. Moreover, under Section 5 of the Act, it is provided that the central government can delegate its powers to the state government or officials for efficient control and enforcement of the provisions of the Act.

STEPS TAKEN TO BOOST LPG SUPPLY

In the aftermath of the latest decision, the Centre has asked refineries to raise LPG production and meet the household demand first. The refineries have been asked not to allocate the LPG constituents like propane and butane for the production of petrochemicals. The aim is to utilize the fuel resources in hand for the purpose of meeting the LPG requirements of the people in the present geopolitical scenario.

NEW RESTRICTIONS FOR CONSUMERS

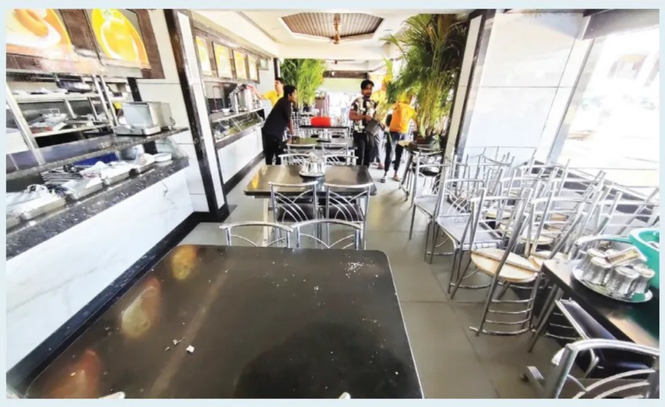
To prevent panic-buying and hoarding, the government has also tightened domestic distribution rules. A mandatory 25-day gap between cylinder bookings has been enforced nationwide. Authorities have clarified that while there is enough stock for regular usage, the LPG Watch status is necessary to prevent artificial shortages caused by over-booking. All states have been placed on high alert, with local administrations directed to coordinate closely with the Petroleum Ministry to monitor regional stock levels and crack down on black-marketing.

GOVT MONITORING GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS: EAM

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said the long period of instability in the region has the potential to disrupt trade routes, trade activities, and the flow of energy resources, which are essential for India's economic growth. "We are carefully observing the developments to understand how they will impact global energy markets and energy supplies," he said.

WHY THE IRAN WAR IS RAISING ENERGY CONCERNS?

The ongoing war between Iran, Israel, and the US in West Asia is now starting to influence other areas beyond the war zones. India relies heavily on imported Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) to meet its demand for it, and a considerable portion of it is imported from countries in West Asia. Despite these issues, the Central Government has assured citizens that the situation is being closely monitored and that there is no need to worry since there is no shortage of fuel at present.



A hotel closed in Majestic near Shantala Silk house as there is a shortage of Commercial cylinders in Bengaluru on Tuesday. ▸ CH Photo

HOTEL INDUSTRY ON THE BRINK

The crisis has hit the commercial sector hardest. Hotel and restaurant associations across India, including AHAR and FHRAI, have reached out to the Ministry, reporting a severe shortage of commercial cylinders. In cities like Mumbai and Bengaluru, hotel owners warn that without immediate intervention, up to 20% of eateries could face temporary shutdowns by mid of the week. To address these grievances, the government has constituted a high-level LPG Committee. This panel features Executive Directors from Indian Oil (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum (HPCL). They are tasked with reviewing representations from hotels and essential industries to ensure that while households remain the priority, the hospitality sector does not grind to a halt.

US to hit Iran '20 times harder' if it stopped oil flow in Strait of Hormuz: Trump

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump on Monday warned Iran that Washington would respond with overwhelming force if Tehran attempted to halt oil shipments through the strategic Strait of Hormuz, a key artery for global energy supplies. In a post on social media, Trump said the United States would escalate military action sharply if Iran disrupted the waterway, through which roughly one-fifth of the world's oil supply moves.

"If Iran does anything that stops the flow of Oil within the Strait of Hormuz, they will be hit by the United States of America TWENTY TIMES HARDER than they have been hit thus far," Trump wrote.

"Additionally, we will take out easily destroyable targets that will make it virtually impossible for Iran to ever be built back, as a Nation, again — Death, Fire, and Fury will reign upon them — But I hope, and pray, that it does not happen!"

Trump added that maintaining open shipping lanes through the strait would benefit countries heavily dependent on the route for energy supplies.

"This is a gift from the United States of America to China, and all of those Nations that heavily use the Hormuz Strait. Hopefully, it is a gesture that will be greatly appreciated."

Trump issued a stern warning to Iran, stating that any disruption to oil flow through the Strait of Hormuz would result in a significantly harsher response from the US. He threatened severe military action, aiming to cripple Iran's ability to rebuild as a nation, while expressing hope that such a confrontation would be avoided.

'UCC THE ONLY ANSWER' TO DISCRIMINATORY LAWS: SC

NEW DELHI

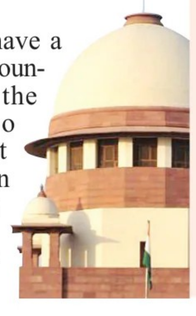
The Supreme Court on Tuesday remarked that the only way to ensure equal rights to all women in the country is to bring in a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) across India.

A three-judge bench of the apex court, headed by the Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant, and Justices R Mahadevan and Joymalya Bagchi, was hearing a batch of pleas alleging violation of women's rights under the succession laws under Muslim personal law (Shariat).

"It is true that a large section of the Muslim society is deprived of equal inheritance rights but if the inheritance provision of Sharia Law is struck down, then what law should govern the inheritance? The answer, as correctly said, is the UCC. The only way to ensure equal rights to all women in the country is to bring in a Uniform UCC across India," the court said.

Appearing for the petitioner, Advocate Prashant Bhushan argued that personal law relating to inheritance will not be protected under Article 25 of the Constitution, which guarantees religious freedom. He submitted that inheritance is a civil right and cannot be considered an essential religious practise.

"We cannot have a situation in the country now after the Shayara Bano judgment, that Muslim women will not have the same rights as Muslim men," Bhushan said.



Hearing plea against Muslim personal law provisions, a Bench led by CJI Surya Kant said courts must defer to legislative wisdom on UCC. The top court warns against striking down 1937 Shariat law, saying the move can create legal vacuum.

SC junks PETA's plea against Kambala at Bangalore Palace Grounds

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed a plea filed by NGO PETA India, questioning the holding of the 'Kambala' in Karnataka's iconic Bangalore Palace grounds, saying the traditional sport, a part of the culture, can be showcased in different parts of the state.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta declined to consider the petition by People for Ethical Treatment of Animals, challenging the High Court's November 14 order which permitted the buffalo races outside the coastal districts of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi.

The counsel contended that the state had earlier filed an affidavit stating that this is a sport, which is traditional in nature and is held in the coastal areas of two districts in Karnataka. They wanted to have this event in Bengaluru's Palace Grounds. "It has got nothing to do with tradition and culture. It's not the tradition and culture in Bengaluru," the counsel said.

The bench, however, said, "If the culture is to be showcased in different parts of the state, what is wrong? Let people in other parts of the state be familiar with the culture. Why restrict it to a particular area only?"

Centre eases FDI norms for China, other countries sharing land border with India

NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Tuesday approved changes to India's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Policy governing investments from countries that share land borders with India, introducing a clearer framework for determining beneficial ownership and a definitive timeline for approvals in critical sectors.

The decision, taken at a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, aims to streamline investments that currently require government approval under Press Note 3 (2020) while safeguarding national interests.

Under the revised guidelines, investments from land-bordering countries with non-controlling beneficial ownership of up to 10% will be permitted through the automatic route, subject to applicable sectoral caps and conditions. The beneficial ownership test will be applied at the level of the investor entity, using definitions aligned with the Prevention of Money Laundering Rules, 2003.

The Cabinet has also introduced an expedited approval mechanism, under which investment proposals from such countries in specified manufacturing sectors will be processed within 60 days. The fast-track window will initially apply to sectors including capital goods, electronic capital goods, electronic components, polysilicon and ingot-wafer manufacturing.

In these cases, the investee company must remain majority-owned and controlled by resident Indian citizens or Indian entities controlled by them at all times, it stated.

The policy changes seek to address concerns raised by global investors and venture capital funds that the restrictions introduced during the pandemic were hampering capital flows. In April 2020, the government tightened FDI rules to prevent opportunistic takeovers of Indian firms during the economic disruptions.

DKS slams BJP MPs for their silence on LPG shortage in India

BENGALURU

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Tuesday said the shortage of LPG refills has become a serious concern in the state, amid warnings from hotel owners that they may be forced to shut down operations if supplies do not improve soon.

Speaking to reporters in Bengaluru, Shivakumar said the issue must be discussed in Parliament and urged Members of Parliament to raise the matter, as the shortage was affecting businesses and the public.

"The government must discuss this in Parliament. They should allow a discussion today. From today itself, we are facing problems. There is no stock," he said.

He criticised BJP MPs for not speaking about the LPG shortage despite its impact on businesses such as hotels and catering establishments.

QUICK READ

Iran–Israel Conflict Disrupts Air Travel, 17 Flights Cancelled at KIA

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Seventeen flights cancelled at Bengaluru airport amid escalating Iran–Israel conflict and airspace restrictions. Air travel at Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru faced disruption after 17 flights were cancelled due to the escalating conflict between Iran and Israel.

Airport authorities said eight incoming flights from Abu Dhabi, Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam, Dubai and Doha were cancelled, along with nine outbound flights from Bengaluru. Officials cited airspace restrictions and security concerns as the reason. Passengers have been advised to check flight schedules with airlines as temporary disruptions are expected for Middle East routes.

B'luru Ropes In Brand Ambassadors for Swachh Survekshan Drive

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has intensified preparations to improve the city's performance in the Swachh Survekshan 2025–26 rankings by appointing six brand ambassadors to promote civic awareness and sanitation initiatives. Last year, Bengaluru ranked 36th among 40 cities with a population exceeding one million, prompting authorities to take stronger measures to enhance cleanliness and waste management. The ambassadors, inducted by GBA and Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited, include Manjamma Jogati, actor Aniruddha Jatkar, and social worker KM Nagaraj. NGO leaders Arun Pai, Abhilash Nair and Aniruddh Dutt were also appointed as ambassadors.

Parcel With Nude Photos Sparks Witchcraft Scare at Airport

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A mysterious parcel containing nude photos and unusual items sparked panic at airport. A suspicious parcel containing nude photographs and unusual objects arrived at the post office of Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru, triggering concern among staff and raising suspicions of a possible witchcraft-related act. Officials were shocked when they opened the package and discovered nude photographs of a man and a woman along with a rotten tomato, a flower garland, an iron piece and toothpaste placed on top. The parcel reportedly disturbed several staff members, affecting their morale and work environment.

Teachers Welcome Move to Ban Mobile Use for Below 16

Teachers hail Karnataka's move restricting social media use for children below sixteen

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The initiative taken by the state government to restrict social media usage for children below the age of 16 has been widely welcomed by teachers and educationists across the state. Many believe the move will help protect young minds from excessive screen exposure and encourage healthier learning habits among students.

Educators point out that childhood is a crucial stage when the brain develops rapidly and the foundation of personality, values and behaviour is formed. According to several studies in Educational Psychology, excessive use of digital devices at a young age can negatively affect attention span, emotional stability and social interaction.

Teachers say the government's decision is in line with the views of several great Indian educationists. Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore believed that children learn best when they can explore nature, interact with others and express their creativity freely. His philosophy emphasised learning through observation, curiosity and real-life experiences rather than dependence on technology.

Similarly, Mahatma Gandhi advocated the concept of Nai Talim, which promoted activity-based learning and practical experiences as the foundation of education.

Another major concern highlighted by teachers is the addictive nature of social media platforms. Experts say the endless stream of videos, posts and online content can easily lead to prolonged scrolling, often exposing children to material that may not be appropriate for their age.

Teachers observe that even adults sometimes struggle to control their screen time. If grown-ups find it difficult to resist the pull of social media, young children with developing minds are even more vulnerable to such distractions.

Many educators also shared personal observations from social gatherings and family events. They noted that instead of interacting with cousins, relatives or friends, children often remain absorbed in mobile phones. Parents may feel relieved when children remain quiet and occupied, but teachers warn that this silence can come at the cost of social development.

Social interactions during childhood are important for building communication skills, confidence and emotional intelligence. Without these experiences, children may miss valuable opportunities to form meaningful relationships.

Teachers stressed that both schools and families must work together to guide children towards balanced habits. They believe that restricting mobile use at an early age can help restore focus on learning, creativity and social interaction.

Educators emphasised that childhood should be filled with conversations, laughter and real-life experiences. Children, they said, must grow in the real world through relationships and experiences rather than spending their formative years scrolling endlessly on screens.

KIC Slaps ₹1.2 L Penalty on 2 BDA Officials for RTI Violations

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Karnataka Information Commission (KIC) has imposed penalties totalling ₹1.2 lakh on two senior officials of the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) for violating provisions of the Right to Information Act, 2005 and failing to provide information sought by citizens.

The action was taken after the commission heard multiple appeals and found that the officials had ignored RTI applications and failed to respond even after repeated notices. The commission emphasised that public authorities must ensure transparency and accountability while dealing with citizens' requests for information.

According to the order, Umesh, Deputy Secretary of the BDA, has been fined ₹1 lakh in four separate cases for failing to respond to RTI applications filed by citizens. The penalty was imposed after the commission found that the official had neglected to furnish information despite being given opportunities to comply with the provisions of the law.

The applicants — Takshak, Tanvita Gaur, P. Ashwija and Balachandra Rao — had sought information under Section 4 of the RTI Act from the Deputy Secretary's office. When the information was not provided within the stipulated time, they approached the commission by filing appeals.

Commission finds officials repeatedly failed to provide information despite multiple opportunities.

During the hearing, the commission observed that despite a show-cause notice issued earlier, the official had not provided the requested information. Taking serious note of the lapse, the commission imposed a penalty of ₹25,000 in each of the four cases, bringing the total fine against Umesh to ₹1 lakh.

The commission also issued a separate notice asking why disciplinary action should not be recommended against him for repeated violations of the RTI provisions.

In another case, BDA Secretary C.L. Shivakumar was fined ₹25,000 for failing to provide information sought by RTI applicant Suresh Chandra Babu. The applicant had requested a copy of a government order relating to the jurisdiction of additional land acquisition officers.

When the request was ignored, the applicant approached the commission seeking intervention. After examining the matter, the commission concluded that the information had been unjustifiably withheld and imposed the penalty.

The commission also warned that disciplinary action could be recommended if the requested documents are not furnished immediately.

The KIC further noted that even nearly two decades after the RTI Act came into force, many public authorities continue to neglect mandatory transparency provisions, including proactive disclosure requirements under Section 4 of the law.

783 Medical PG Seats Remain Vacant in K'taka After Counselling Ends

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

As postgraduate medical counselling concluded in Karnataka, as many as 783 seats — nearly 16 percent of the total — remained unfilled, raising concerns among education experts and authorities.

According to data from the Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA), around 4,773 postgraduate medical seats were available for counselling this year. Nearly 14,400 candidates registered for the process and more than 10,000 students entered their preferences. However, a significant number of seats still remained vacant after all rounds of counselling.

Experts attribute the usually high vacancy to multiple factors, including the sharp increase in the number of seats, prolonged counselling cycles and the high fees charged for management quota seats in private medical colleges.

This year witnessed an addition of 967 new postgraduate seats in a single year, leading to a total of 4,773 seats available through KEA counselling. However, many of the unfilled seats fall under management quota, where annual fees vary widely — ranging from about ₹25,000 for courses such as anatomy to as high as ₹1.3 crore for popular specialisations like dermatology.

What makes the trend particularly unusual this year is that even seats in highly sought-after clinical specialities have remained vacant. For instance, of the 500 seats available in general medicine, 37 were left unfilled. In MD Radiodiagnosis, 35 out of 287 seats remained vacant, while general surgery recorded 11 vacant seats out of 425. Similarly, dermatology saw 15 vacancies among 196 seats, and paediatrics had 25 vacant seats out of 362.

Pre-clinical and para-clinical courses continued to see low demand. Only eight students opted for anatomy out of 119 available seats. Just 20 candidates chose physiology and 21 selected biochemistry, while 70 opted for pharmacology. Pathology saw comparatively better interest, with 226 students enrolling in the subject.

Realtor Kidnapped, Killed; Body Found in TN

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A realtor from Anekal in Bengaluru Rural district was allegedly kidnapped on Sunday evening and later murdered, with his body found dumped near Denkanikottai in neighbouring Tamil Nadu on Monday morning. The victim, identified as Gopal, was travelling in his car with his friend Satish when a gang of car-borne miscreants intercepted them near Karpur along the Karnataka–Tamil Nadu border between 6.30 pm and 7 pm. According to police, the attackers rammed their vehicle into Gopal's car, forcing it to stop. The gang allegedly sprayed a chemical substance on Satish, leaving him unable to see clearly. As he tried to escape and seek help, the assailants reportedly dragged Gopal out of the car, forced him into their vehicle and fled the scene. Satish later alerted the police, prompting a large-scale search operation. Officers gathered information that the kidnappers had driven towards Denkanikottai in Tamil Nadu. The Karnataka Police formed seven special teams to trace the victim and identify the culprits. Initially, investigators suspected that the kidnappers might have travelled towards Shivamogga or Mangaluru, and two teams were dispatched to those regions, while others searched areas along the Karnataka–Tamil Nadu border.

Residents Demand Immediate Rejuvenation of New Lake

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Residents of Kengeri suburb have demanded immediate rejuvenation of the Gandhinagar New Lake, warning authorities that they will launch a hunger strike if restoration work is not carried out soon.

Members of the Valagerahalli Residents' Association raised the issue after submitting a letter to the Greater Bengaluru Authority Chief Commissioner highlighting the deteriorating condition of the lake.

Officials from the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), led by Superintendent Engineer Bindu, inspected the site following the complaint. However, residents alleged that no concrete response has yet been given to their demands.

According to locals, more than ₹19 crore has been spent in phases for the development of the lake, but the promised rejuvenation remains incomplete. A damaged internal sewage pipeline running through the middle of the lake has led to water leakage, causing the lake to dry up almost completely.

N Kadarappa said the broken pipeline is draining the lake's water, resulting in a sharp decline in groundwater levels in the surrounding area. Several nearby borewells have already begun drying up, leading to water shortages for residents.

Parrot Astrologer Booked for Cheating IT Officer

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Police have registered a cheating case against a self-proclaimed parrot astrologer who allegedly duped an Income Tax Department officer of gold and silver ornaments worth several lakhs under the pretext of performing rituals for career growth and a better life. The complaint was filed by a 55-year-old officer working in the I-T Department. According to the complaint lodged at the Bharathinagar Police Station, the accused, identified as Shekhar, allegedly took away 194 grams of gold ornaments and 1.3 kg of silver ornaments from the victim. Police said the officer first met Shekhar in December near Sri Circle, where the accused used to sit on the roadside offering parrot astrology readings.

West Asia Tensions Hit LPG Supply; B'luru Eateries Warn of Shutdown

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Escalating geopolitical tensions in West Asia have begun affecting the supply of commercial Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) to hotels and eateries in Bengaluru, raising fears of disruptions in the city's food service sector.

Hoteliers and self-service restaurant owners reported an unexpected shortage of LPG cylinders, which are essential for daily kitchen operations. The Bangalore Hotels Association warned that many small and medium-scale eateries may be forced to temporarily shut down if the situation continues.

Honorary President of the association, PC Rao said only about 10 percent of hotels and restaurants in the city received LPG supplies. Most

establishments currently have enough gas stock to operate only until Tuesday afternoon or evening, he said.

Hoteliers stated that distributors informed them they had received instructions from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas to prioritise LPG supply for domestic consumers amid global supply concerns triggered by the West Asia crisis. However, establishments connected to piped gas networks remain unaffected. Industry representatives said around 10–15 percent of hotels and restaurants in Bengaluru receive piped gas from GAIL (India) Limited, ensuring uninterrupted operations.

The association has urged authorities to restore adequate commercial LPG supply quickly to prevent shutdowns and protect the livelihoods of thousands working in the hospitality sector.

SOCIAL CONCERN

Tejasvi Surya Writes to Hardeep Puri Over LPG Shortage Concerns in Bengaluru

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Tejasvi Surya has written to Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri raising concerns over a possible shortage of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) affecting hotels and restaurants in the city amid the ongoing West Asia crisis.

The ripple effects of the geopolitical tensions in West Asia have begun impacting the hospitality sector in Bengaluru, with reports emerging that limited supply of commercial LPG cylinders could disrupt operations in eateries and hotels. Some establishments have reportedly been forced to temporarily shut down due to the shortage.

Highlighting the issue, Surya said he had communicated the concerns of the Bangalore Hotels Association to the Union government and sought immediate measures to ensure uninterrupted LPG supply for the sector.

Sharing the development on social media platform X, the BJP MP said the matter had been taken up with the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. According to him, the minister has constituted a high-priority panel to monitor the situation and ensure that LPG supply remains uninterrupted for non-domestic users, including hotels and restaurants. In his letter, Surya pointed out that the restaurant and food service industry depends heavily on commercial LPG cylinders for daily kitchen operations. Unlike several other sectors, most commercial kitchens currently lack immediate alternatives such as piped natural gas or large-scale electric cooking systems.

Tejasvi Surya also cautioned that any disruption in LPG supply could have wider consequences for the hospitality sector, affecting business operations, employment and services provided to consumers.

He also cautioned that any disruption in LPG supply could have wider consequences for the hospitality sector, affecting business operations, employment and services provided to consumers. The MP stressed that while the industry supports the government's priority of ensuring LPG supply for domestic households, commercial establishments should also receive uninterrupted supply through the existing distribution network.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has directed oil refineries to increase LPG production in response to the current supply challenges caused by global geopolitical tensions.

The ministry said additional LPG output would primarily be channelled for domestic consumption to ensure energy security for households during the ongoing uncertainty in global fuel markets.

To manage supply effectively and prevent hoarding or black marketing, the government has also introduced a 25-day inter-booking period for LPG consumers. Officials said these measures are aimed at stabilising supply while maintaining priority for household cooking gas needs.

Industry representatives hope the government will also ensure adequate availability of commercial LPG cylinders so that hotels and restaurants in Bengaluru can continue operations without disruption.

QUICK READ

Commercial LPG Shortage Hits Hotels in Vijayapura

Vijayapura

The ongoing uncertainty triggered by the war situation has begun affecting the hospitality sector in Vijayapura, with several hotel owners reporting difficulties in obtaining commercial LPG cylinders required for daily cooking. Hoteliers say the shortage of commercial gas cylinders is creating serious operational challenges and may force them to temporarily shut down their businesses if the situation continues. Shantesh, owner of the popular Anna Idli Vada outlets, said his outlets are already running on limited stock and may not be able to function if fresh supply does not arrive soon. According to him, the availability of commercial LPG cylinders has drastically reduced in recent days.

Court Rejects Anticipatory Bail Plea in POCSO Case

Yadgir

The District and Sessions Court in Yadgir rejected the anticipatory bail application filed by Mallikarjun Mutya of Mahal Roza in Shahapur taluk, who is facing allegations under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. According to sources, a case had been registered against Mutya at the Gogi Police Station for allegedly behaving inappropriately with a minor girl. Following the registration of the case, Mutya had approached the district court seeking anticipatory bail.After hearing the matter, District and Sessions Court Judge Marulasiddharadhya dismissed the anticipatory bail plea on Monday.

Postal Adalat to be Held on March 23

Vijayapura

The Postal Department will organise the 4th Quarterly Postal Adalat for the year 2025–26 on March 23 at 3 p.m. at the office of the Superintendent of Post Offices, Vijayapura Division. Residents from the taluks of Babaleshwar, Basavana Bagewadi, Chadachan, Devar Hipparagi, Indi, Kolhar, Muddebihal, Nidagundi, Sindagi, Talikote, Tikota, Alamel and Vijayapura can submit their complaints, suggestions and feedback regarding postal services for discussion during the Adalat. Complaints and suggestions should be submitted in writing with the heading For Postal Adalat and can be sent through any post office on or before March 16, 2026. No postal charges will be required for sending such letters.

Case Registered Over Alleged Forced Religious Conversion

A case has been registered at the Kalaburagi Suburban Police Station following allegations of attempts to forcibly convert villagers to Christianity in Sharan Sirsigi

KALABURAGI

According to police sources, more than ten individuals associated with the Everlasting Life Father organization have been accused of visiting Hindu households in Sharan Sirsigi village and allegedly attempting to persuade residents to convert to Christianity. The group reportedly visited homes under the pretext of spreading religious awareness.

The matter came to light when villagers noticed the group distributing pamphlets from house to house. Their activities reportedly raised suspicion among local residents, prompting several Hindu youths in the village to

question the group about the pamphlets and the purpose of their visit.

During the interaction, tensions reportedly escalated as villagers sought clarification regarding the nature of the material being distributed and the intent behind the outreach activities. Some residents alleged that the group was encouraging them to adopt Christianity.

One of the villagers, identified as Amisha, claimed that members of the group offered financial assistance and assured support for her children's education and healthcare if she agreed to convert to Christianity. The allegation further fueled concerns among villagers about possible attempts at forced or induced religious conversion.

Following the incident, two residents of the village, Mallesh and Naganna, approached the Kalaburagi Suburban Police Station and filed a formal complaint regarding the matter. Based on their complaint, police registered a case against the accused individuals.

Police officials stated that an investigation has been initiated to verify the allegations and examine the evidence related to the incident. They said statements from villagers and other relevant witnesses are being recorded as part of the inquiry.

Authorities have assured that appropriate legal action will be taken if the allegations are found to be true. The police are also examining the activities of the organisation involved and the circumstances under which the pamphlets were distributed in the village. Further investigation into the case is currently underway.

Teen Dies of Electrocution; Friends Allegedly Dump Body in Lake in Raichur District

RAICHUR

In a shocking incident in Karnataka's Raichur district, a 15-year-old boy died after being electrocuted near a well, following which his friends allegedly dumped his body in a lake in an attempt to conceal the incident.

The deceased has been identified as Karthik, a resident of Gundasagar village in Lingsugur taluk of Raichur district. Karthik, a student of Class 9, had gone to Lingsugur town along with two of his friends to purchase new clothes for an upcoming school function.

According to police sources, after finishing their shopping, the three boys went near a well in the area to drink water. During this time, Karthik reportedly came into contact with an electric source near the well and died due to electrocution.

The sudden incident left the two accompanying boys panicked. Fearing that they might be suspected of involvement in Karthik's death, the friends allegedly attempted to hide the incident. Police said the boys reportedly placed Karthik's body in a gunny bag and transported it on a motorcycle.

They then allegedly tied a stone to the bag and dumped it in Karadkal Lake in an attempt to dispose of the body and avoid suspicion.

Meanwhile, when Karthik failed to return home even late in the evening, his parents grew worried and began searching for him. During their search, they questioned the two boys who had earlier accompanied him to Lingsugur town.

Under pressure from Karthik's parents and local residents, the boys reportedly confessed to what had happened. Following this, villagers informed the authorities and handed the two youths over to the police.

A 19-year-old youth was allegedly murdered by a minor following a quarrel in Teradal town of Rabakavi–Banahatti taluk in Bagalkot district, police said

MINOR HELD FOR MURDER OF YOUTH IN BAGALKOT DIST

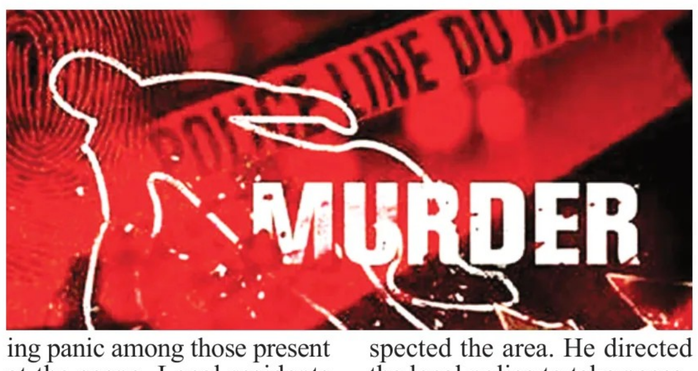
BAGALKOT

The deceased has been identified as Rahul Saptasagar (19), a resident of Teradal town. According to preliminary information provided by police, tension had reportedly been building between Rahul and the minor accused for some time before the incident took place.

Police sources said the dispute was allegedly connected to a girl and escalated during the Holi celebrations in the area. On the day prior to the incident, the 16-year-old minor reportedly arrived at the location along with a group of friends and confronted Rahul, leading to an argument between the two.

The verbal altercation soon turned into a violent confrontation. During the quarrel, the accused allegedly attacked Rahul using a sharp object attached to a motorcycle key chain. He reportedly stabbed Rahul in the neck, causing severe injuries.

Rahul began bleeding heavily following the attack, creating panic among those present at the scene. Local residents immediately rushed to assist the injured youth and shifted him to a nearby hospital for treatment.



However, due to heavy blood loss, Rahul succumbed to his injuries while being taken to the hospital, police said. The incident created tension in Teradal town, prompting police personnel to rush to the spot soon after receiving information about the attack. Senior police officials also visited the scene to assess the situation and ensure that law and order was maintained.

Bagalkot Superintendent of Police Siddharth Goyal visited the crime scene and inspected the area. He directed the local police to take necessary action and conduct a thorough investigation into the incident.

Police have taken the 16-year-old minor into custody in connection with the case. Authorities are now investigating the circumstances that led to the violent altercation and the subsequent murder.

A case has been registered at the Teradal Police Station, and further investigation is currently underway. Police officials are also questioning witnesses and collecting additional evidence to establish the sequence of events that led to the tragic incident.

Chalavadi Mahasabha Stages Protest at Ambedkar Circle

RAICHUR

Members of the district committee of the Chalavadi Mahasabha staged a protest at Ambedkar Circle in Raichur city demanding continuation of the earlier reservation system and seeking clarity on the issue of internal reservation.The protesters urged the government to implement internal reservation in a manner similar to the creamy layer system and resolve the prevailing confusion regarding the policy. They alleged that the internal reservation survey report prepared by retired Justice Nagamohan Das was unscientific and had caused injustice to several communities. According to the protesters, the report has adversely affected 19 right-hand communities belonging to Adi Dravida, Adi Karnataka and Adi Andhra groups, who are considered original inhabitants, leading to social, educational and employment-related disadvantages.The protesters also questioned the government's decision to increase the reservation limit to 56 percent, stating that the High Court had already issued a stay order as it exceeds the 50 percent limit prescribed under constitutional provisions.

Labourers Protest Alleging Denial of Work Under MGNREGA

RAICHUR

The protest was organised by the Grameena Kooli Karmikara Sanghatane (GRAKOOS), a rural labourers' organisation, which accused local authorities of failing to provide employment opportunities to workers under the MGNREGA scheme.

According to the protesters, several labourers from rural areas had submitted applications seeking employment under the scheme as the summer season has reduced other sources of income. However, they alleged that many gram panchayats were either refusing to accept the applications or failing to provide work within the stipulated time.

Under the provisions of the MGNREGA Act, applicants are entitled to receive employment within 15 days of submitting a request for work. The protesters claimed that despite following the procedure and applying for work, labourers were not being given employment within the legally mandated time frame.

The workers further alleged that panchayat officials were citing instructions from higher authorities and claiming that the Central government had directed them not to approve new projects if ten earlier works were still pending. Using this reason, officials were reportedly declining new applications and denying employment opportunities to labourers. In addition to the lack of work, the protesters also raised concerns about delays in wage payments. They said that although the Central government had announced that wages under the scheme would be credited to workers' bank accounts within seven days, the payments were often delayed for longer periods.

Case Against 3 in Mysterious Death of Student

GUNDASAGAR

The deceased has been identified as Karthik Basavaraj Sudi (15), a resident of Gundasagar village. According to police sources, Karthik had attended a wedding function in the village on Sunday. Before leaving the function, he reportedly informed his family members that he would go to Lingsugur town and return home shortly.

However, when Karthik failed to return home even after several hours, his family members became worried and began searching for him. Their concern grew when they could not find any information about his whereabouts. Later, Karthik's body was reportedly found near Karadakallu Lake under suspicious circumstances, raising doubts about the nature of his death.

Following the discovery, Karthik's father, Basavaraj Aminappa, lodged a complaint with the Lingsugur Police Station. In his complaint, he alleged that three youths from the same village had taken his son away on a motorcycle. According to the complaint, the trio had reportedly taken Karthik from the wedding venue and later killed him before dumping his body near the lake in an attempt to conceal the crime.

Based on the complaint filed by the father, police registered a case against the three accused and began an investigation into the incident.

AIDSO to Hold District Convention in Vijayapura

VIJAYAPURA

Addressing a press conference, AIDSO leaders stated that the state government is planning to establish around 800 KPS–Magnet schools and merge nearby government schools located within a radius of 3 to 5 kilometres into these institutions. According to the organisation, if the scheme is implemented extensively, it could result in the closure of nearly 40,000 government schools, including some government colleges across Karnataka.

The organisation expressed concern that the proposal has already created anxiety among residents in several rural areas where smaller schools may be merged with larger magnet schools located in neighbouring villages. Villagers in such areas are reportedly demanding that schools in their own villages be retained and strengthened so that students do not face difficulties in accessing education.

AIDSO leaders said that instead of closing or merging schools, the government should focus on improving the existing government education system. They pointed out that many schools in the state are already facing serious challenges such as a shortage of teachers and poor infrastructure. According to the organisation, more than 60,000 teacher posts in government schools remain vacant. They also highlighted that thousands of schools in rural areas are functioning with only a single teacher, which significantly affects the quality of education.

In addition to the shortage of teaching staff, AIDSO raised concerns about the lack of adequate infrastructure in several government schools. Issues such as inadequate buildings, insufficient classrooms, and lack of proper toilet facilities continue to affect students in many parts of the state, the organisation said.

The student organisation has urged the Karnataka government to withdraw the proposed KPS–Magnet School scheme and instead prioritise strengthening existing government schools by filling vacant teacher posts and improving basic facilities.

To press for these demands, AIDSO will organise a district-level convention on March 16 at 11 a.m. at the Cooperative Union Hall near the Central Bus Stand in Vijayapura. The organisation has appealed to students, education activists and members of the public to participate in the convention and support the demand for protecting and strengthening government schools.

LPG PANIC BUYING

Panic Buying of LPG Cylinders Reported Amid Rumours of disruption in supply

VIJAYAPURA

According to local reports, large numbers of residents rushed to LPG agencies to refill or purchase domestic cylinders fearing a possible disruption in supply. The panic buying resulted in long lines and unusual crowding outside several gas distribution centres.

Visuals from different parts of the city showed residents standing in queues outside major LPG distributors, including the Indane Gas Agency on BLDEA Road and the Bharat Gas Agency near Station Road. Many people were seen waiting for extended periods in an attempt to secure cylinders before any potential shortage could occur.

Residents reportedly feared that supply chains might be affected if the situation escalated, prompting them to stock up on cylinders in advance. The sudden influx of customers created a tense atmosphere outside several agencies.

In addition to the long queues, the rush also caused traffic congestion near some distribution centres as people gathered in large numbers. Some residents attempted to make fresh bookings on the spot, further adding to the crowd management challenges faced by agency staff.

However, LPG distributors in Vijayapura have appealed to residents not to panic and assured that there is no shortage of domestic LPG cylinders in the district. Agency owners clarified that the surge in demand was largely driven by rumours and misinformation.

One LPG distributor stated that adequate stocks of household cylinders are available and that regular deliveries from supply depots are continuing without interruption. He urged the public to avoid panic buying and instead follow the standard booking system for cylinder refills.

Officials also reassured residents that the LPG supply across Vijayapura district remains stable. They confirmed that distributors are receiving regular consignments and that there is no reason for concern regarding availability.

Authorities have advised citizens not to rely on rumours circulating on social media and to trust only verified information from official sources. They also urged residents to maintain calm and purchase cylinders only according to their actual needs.

Officials added that normal distribution of LPG cylinders will continue as per the regular booking schedule and that there is sufficient supply to meet consumer demand.

QUICK READ

Direct job interview drive scheduled in Gadag

Gadag
The District Employment Exchange Office will conduct a direct interview drive on March 13 at 10 am in Vivekananda Nagar, near Sai Baba Temple, KHB Colony, Gadag. Swatantra Micropin Private Limited will recruit candidates for the SFO (Field Work) post. Applicants with SSLC, PUC, ITI, or any degree qualification aged between 18 and 30 can attend. Candidates must bring mark sheet copies, two resumes, and an Aadhaar card xerox. Registration on the interview day is mandatory. Beneficiaries of the Yuvanidhi Yojana are also encouraged to participate. For details, contact 6363330688, 7022606050, or 8951460061.

Gas leak sparks fire, couple seriously hurt

Chamarajanagar
A fire broke out in a house in Railway Layout after a cooking gas leak, leaving a couple seriously injured. The victims, identified as C. Paramesh and Manjula, suffered injuries as flames engulfed the kitchen. The fire destroyed household items, including utensils, stove, pagada, and davasa grains. Neighbours rushed to help and contacted emergency services. The cause of the gas leak is under investigation. The injured couple was immediately taken to a nearby hospital for treatment. Authorities have urged residents to check gas connections and safety measures to prevent such accidents.

Lovers jump into Tungabhadra, rescued by firefighters

Davanagere
A shocking incident occurred in Honnali town when a young couple from Davangere attempted suicide by jumping into the Tungabhadra river from the bridge. Locals quickly alerted the firefighters, who rushed to the spot and rescued the pair safely. Both were admitted to a nearby hospital for medical evaluation. Fortunately, there were no casualties as the river's water level was low. Authorities are investigating the reasons behind the attempt, while officials have urged people to seek help during emotional distress and highlighted available helplines for mental health support.

YOUTH CONGRESS PROTESTS LPG PRICE HIKE

Demonstrators said ₹60 domestic and ₹115 commercial LPG price hikes, plus rising taxes, heavily burden poor families, workers, students, and the middle class

SHIVAMOGGA

Members of the Indian Youth Congress staged a protest at Seenappashetty (Gopi) Circle in Shivamogga against the recent increase in cooking gas prices.

As part of the protest, activists lit a traditional wood stove and prepared tea to symbolically show how rising LPG prices are forcing people to return to old cooking methods. Protesters alleged that the BJP-led Central government has been repeatedly increasing the prices of essential commodities, making life difficult for ordinary citizens.

The demonstrators said the ₹60 increase in domestic LPG cylinder prices and ₹115 rise in commercial cylinder prices have placed a heavy financial burden on poor families, daily wage workers, students and the middle class. They also claimed that continuous tax increases on essential items have further worsened the situation.

Protesters criticised the government, saying that instead of creating employment opportunities or reducing the cost of living, it has increased taxes and added pressure on common people.

The Youth Congress leaders submitted a memorandum to the President through the District Collector, demanding immediate withdrawal of the LPG price hike. They warned that if the government fails to address the issue, public protests may intensify across the region.

Among those present at the protest were K. Chethan Gowda, President of the Textile Corporation, District Youth Congress President Harshit Gowda and City President Charana J. Shetty.

Former municipal member H. C. Yogish and several party workers including Madhu, Shivakumar, Suvarna Nagaraj, Chinnappa and Vijay also took part in the demonstration.

Lawyers to protest demanding internal reservation implementation

KOPPAL

Lawyers belonging to the Madiga community and Scheduled Tribes have announced a protest in Koppal on March 12 demanding the implementation of internal reservation in government job recruitment.

Addressing a press conference at the Working Journalists Association Patrika Bhavan, community lawyers said the State government had earlier promised internal reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Lawyers including Ravikumar Bannikoppa, D. M. Poojara, Virupakshappa Kattimani, S. H. Surapura and Prakash Hadimani said the government had earlier assured 17 percent internal reservation for Scheduled Castes and 17 percent for Scheduled Tribes.

However, they alleged that due to legal challenges, the implementation was delayed. They expressed concern that the government is now proceeding with recruitment by following the earlier system of 15 percent reservation for Scheduled Castes and 3 percent for Scheduled Tribes.

They alleged legal challenges delayed implementation and expressed concern that the government is continuing recruitment under the previous 15% SC and 3% ST reservation system

According to the lawyers, this would cause injustice to the Madiga community. They demanded that recruitment should be carried out based on the proposed internal reservation system. If recruitment is done under the old 15 percent quota, they insisted that a separate six percent reservation should be allocated to the Madiga community and four percent for Scheduled Tribes.

As part of the protest on March 12, lawyers from the Madiga and Scheduled Tribe communities will take out a march from Ganj Circle to the District Administration office in Koppal and submit a memorandum to the government through the District Collector.

They also warned that if the government continues recruitment under the old reservation system without implementing internal reservation, they will launch further legal and democratic protests.

Police seize 4,175 litres diesel from illegal storage

BELTHANGADY

Authorities seized 4,175 litres of diesel stored illegally in barrels and cans at Mudalthiyar in Kaniyur village, Belthangady. The raid was conducted on the night of March 9 by Uppinangady police under the guidance of Subdivisional Deputy Superintendent of Police Rohini C.K. following a tip-off.

During the search, a shed near 35-year-old Jagadish's house was found containing about 20 barrels and five cans holding diesel. Several empty barrels, cans, and other materials were also recovered. The diesel is estimated to be worth Rs 3.5 lakh.

Investigations revealed that the fuel was stored without any license and safety measures, posing a potential hazard. A case has been registered at Uppinangady Police Station under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023, the Essential Commodities Act 1955, and the Petroleum Act 1934, and the investigation is ongoing. The police have warned citizens about reporting suspicious fuel storage to prevent accidents.

Motamma said a new sub-divisional officer slowed work, but discussions with authorities aim to accelerate progress

Land issues delay Mugtihalli-Mudigere road project

CHIKKAMAGALURU

Mudigere MLA Nayana Motamma has highlighted delays in the construction of the national highway connecting Mugtihalli and Mudigere, pointing to land acquisition as the main hurdle.

The highway project, which has been under development for some time, is not progressing as expected. The MLA stated that securing land and ensuring fair compensation to affected landowners is a crucial step for the project's smooth execution. A recent meeting with MPs emphasized the importance of fast-tracking the land acquisition process to avoid further delays.

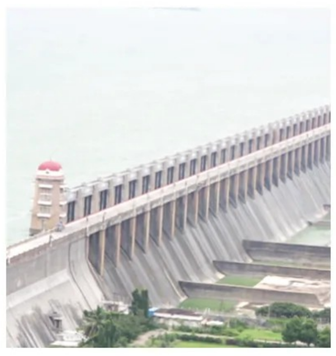
Motamma also noted that the recent change in the sub-divisional officer (AC) has slightly slowed work. She said she has already discussed the matter with the Executive Engineer of National Highways and the District Collector, and instructions have been issued to accelerate progress.

According to the MLA, the next phase of financial bidding for the project will begin immediately after the land acquisition is completed and compensation payments are disbursed. She urged the district administration to ensure that landowners receive their dues promptly to prevent further postponements.

Residents of Mudigere and surrounding areas have expressed concern about the delay, as the highway is expected to improve connectivity and boost trade. Motamma assured citizens that all steps are being taken to resume work swiftly and bring the project back on track.

Fifteen crest gates installed at Tungabhadra Dam

KOPPAL



The installation of new crest gates at the Tungabhadra Dam near Munirabad in Koppal district is progressing steadily, with officials confirming that more than 15 gates have already been installed as part of the ongoing modernization work.

The Tungabhadra reservoir is considered a lifeline for several districts in the states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Water from the dam supports irrigation for nearly 14 lakh acres of farmland spread across eight districts in these three states.

Authorities have taken up the project to replace old crest gates with new ones to improve the safety and efficiency of the reservoir. As part of the work, the trial operation of three newly installed gates has already been completed successfully. The testing process involved raising and lowering the gates to check their performance and safety.

Officials said that trial runs for the remaining 12 installed gates are yet to be completed. Meanwhile, the installation and testing of the 18th gate have also been carried out successfully.

The removal and clearance work of 25 old crest gates has already been completed. Work to remove two more old gates is currently underway.

In addition, the construction of 25 new crest gates has been finished. Two more gates are still under construction, with fabrication work taking place in Hospet and Gadag. Electrical installation for three of the newly built gates has also been completed.

Congress stages protest over rising gas prices

UDUPI

The Udupi district Congress organized a protest against the recent hike in cooking and commercial gas cylinder prices. Activists marched from the District Congress Bhavan to Brahmagiri Circle, where they staged a demonstration that briefly disrupted traffic.

During the protest, women Congress workers made a symbolic statement by setting up a stove on the road and serving tea to passersby. The demonstrators highlighted that the price increase, now affecting commercial cylinders at Rs 115, would heavily impact households and small businesses, particularly hotels, which may face serious financial strain.

Protesters criticized the central government, noting that the same party now in power at the Centre had previously opposed price hikes. They expressed disappointment that the authorities appear unconcerned about the burden on ordinary citizens.

Adding a dramatic touch, participants displayed portraits of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on the gas cylinders to underscore their message. The protest lasted around half an hour, causing a temporary traffic jam at Brahmagiri Circle.

Congress leaders emphasized that millions of people across the country would feel the effect of rising gas prices. "The government must act with compassion and protect citizens from this financial strain," one activist said, calling for immediate relief measures to prevent hardship for families and the hospitality industry.

Railway Committee urges new Ballari rail line

BALLARI

The Karnataka State Railway Action Committee has urged the Union government to immediately start work on the proposed railway line connecting Ballari, Siruguppa and Sindhanur to improve transport facilities in the region.

A 25-member delegation led by committee president K. M. Maheshwara Swamy and former Siruguppa MLA M. S. Somalingappa met Union Minister of State for Railways V. Somanna in New Delhi and submitted a memorandum with several demands related to railway development.

The delegation pointed out that a survey for the Ballari–Siruguppa–Sindhanur–Lingasuguru railway line had been ordered years ago during the tenures of former Railway Ministers Mallikarjun Kharge and D. V. Sadananda Gowda.

Although the survey was completed nearly 13 years ago, work on the project has still not begun. The committee demanded that construction should start without further delay.

Members of the delegation also requested the introduction of a daily Udaya Superfast Train or Vande Bharat Express between Ballari and Bengaluru. They said such a train service would greatly help passengers travelling for work, education and tourism. They added that people of Ballari have been demanding an Udaya train service for nearly 30 years.

The delegation also urged the authorities to restart the Kolhapur–Munaguru Express and the weekly trains between Shivamogga and Chennai that were stopped earlier.

They further demanded early completion of modernization works at Ballari railway station and better facilities for unloading fertilizers. Leaders including K. M. Kotresh and P. Yogaraj were present during the meeting.

FAITH AND CULTURE

Doddammatai festival celebrated with devotees in Holalu

MANDYA

The annual festival of village deity Sri Doddammatai was celebrated with great devotion and enthusiasm in Holalu village of Mandya taluk, with a large number of devotees participating in the event.

The celebrations began with special rituals at village temples including Muddamma Devi and Maramma Devi. Women and children from the village offered prayers and performed traditional rituals, while the sound of drums and temple instruments filled the atmosphere.

Later, devotees gathered at the Sri Doddammatai Temple where people from all communities came together to offer prayers and fulfil their vows. Special flower decorations were arranged for the goddess and Mahamangalarati was performed. Prasadam was distributed to the devotees.

Members of the Sri Madiwala Machidevara community also took part in the rituals. As part of their service, they laid sarees on the ground for women devotees who carried vows while walking towards the temple.

After offering prayers, former vice president of the Vokkaliga Sangha H. L. Shivanna said the festival has been celebrated with devotion for many years and attracts thousands of devotees every year.

He wished that the goddess bless the village with peace and prosperity.

Village leader Jatti Kumar also addressed the gathering and prayed for good rainfall and prosperity for farmers.

Several leaders and villagers attended the festival and sought blessings of the goddess.

Members of the Vinayaka Friends Association distributed buttermilk to devotees who attended the celebration. Temple priests including Shivaraj and Arun conducted the rituals.

Complete voter list mapping by March 20: Venkatesh

Polling Booth Level Officers have worked since September 2025, completing 50–80% tasks, while the Deputy Commissioner stressed finishing remaining mapping

CHITRADURGA

District Election Officer and Deputy Commissioner T. Venkatesh has directed officials to complete the pending voter list mapping work related to the Comprehensive Revision of Voter Lists (SIR)-2026 by March 20 without fail. He warned that disciplinary action will be taken against officials who show negligence or delay the process.

The voter list mapping work involves linking the 2025 voter list with the 2002 voter list to ensure accuracy and transparency in electoral records. This process is currently underway in six assembly constituencies across the district.

Polling Booth Level Officers (BLOs) have been engaged in this task since September 2025. While some officers have already completed between 50 and 80 percent of the work, a significant portion remains pending. The Deputy Commissioner emphasized that all remaining mapping activities must be completed fully within the given deadline.

Venkatesh stressed the importance of maintaining accurate voter records as part of the election preparation process. He said that updating and verifying voter lists is essential to ensure that eligible voters are properly included and that electoral procedures remain fair and transparent.

Officials have been instructed to monitor the progress closely and coordinate effectively to meet the deadline. The district administration has also warned that strict disciplinary action will be initiated against polling booth-level officers who fail to complete the assigned work within the stipulated time.

QUICK READ

Chikkaballapura Seeks Home Guard Volunteers

Chikkaballapura

The Chikkaballapura District Home Guard Office has opened applications for 32 honorary Home Guard volunteer positions across local taluk units. Interested candidates aged 20 to 50, who have passed SSLC, live within 6 km of the unit, and are physically and mentally fit, can apply free of cost before March 31 (except on government holidays). Applicants must submit SSLC certificate, Aadhaar, voter ID, medical certificate, bank copy, ration card, photos, and police verification. Candidates with extra skills can provide supporting documents. The office encourages service-minded locals to join and contribute to community safety.

Applications Open for Ambedkar, Jagjivan Ram Awards

Chitradurga

The Social Welfare Department has extended the last date to apply for the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram State Level Awards to March 15, 2026. These awards honor individuals who have worked hard for the welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Applicants must be at least 35 years old and can apply for only one award. Ten people will be selected for each award. Forms are available at the Assistant Director's office in each taluk and must be submitted to the Deputy Director, Social Welfare Department, Chitradurga.

Over 6,000 students appear for economics exam

Chitradurga

A total of 6,364 students appeared for the Second PUC Economics exam held across the district on Tuesday. The exam was conducted smoothly at 26 centres. Out of 6,660 registered students, 296 were absent. Deputy Director K. Thimmaiah of the School Education Department (Undergraduate) said there will be no debarment cases reported in the district. Authorities ensured proper arrangements at all examination venues, allowing students to take the test without disruption. Officials appreciated the cooperation of students, teachers, and exam staff for maintaining discipline and smooth functioning during the Economics exam.

Mega Lok Adalat to be held on March 14

CHIKKABALLAPURA

Ramalingegowda said Lok Adalat resolves disputes like criminal, bank, motor accident, cheque bounce, labour, utility, and land cases efficiently, saving time, money, and reducing court burden

The first Mega Lok Adalat of 2026 will be held on March 14 in all courts of the district, said Principal District and Sessions Judge T. P. Ramalingegowda.

Speaking at a press conference organised by the District Legal Services Authority at the District Court auditorium in Chikkaballapura, he said the Lok Adalat will provide an opportunity for citizens to settle their disputes quickly and peacefully.

He said more than 49,000 cases are currently pending in district courts. Out of these, around 12,222 cases have already been identified for settlement in the Lok Adalat, and the authorities aim to resolve more than 12,000 cases during the programme.

Ramalingegowda said Lok Adalat helps people settle disputes through mutual agreement without lengthy court procedures. This system saves time and money for both parties and helps reduce the burden on courts.

Various types of cases will be taken up during the Lok Adalat, including criminal compoundable cases, bank recovery cases, motor accident compensation claims, cheque bounce cases, labour disputes, electricity and water bill disputes and land acquisition cases.

Family disputes, employment-related issues and other civil matters that can be resolved through compromise will also be considered.

He explained that mediators and legal experts will guide both parties and help them reach a mutually acceptable settlement. When disputes are resolved through compromise, relationships between parties are maintained and conflicts end peacefully.

People who wish to settle their disputes can approach the District Legal Services Authority or the Taluk Legal Services Committees in advance for guidance.

District Senior Civil Judge and Member Secretary Shilpa was present at the press conference.

The accused—Harish M.C., Santosh Kumar M.R., Ganesh B.R., and Shalini Kom—were arrested; phones used in planning were seized

4 arrested over priest murder case

MANDYA

The shocking murder of Siddalingappa, a priest from Maralagalagrama in Srirangapatna taluk, has taken a new turn as police arrested four people connected to the crime. The priest went missing on March 6 after visiting K. Shettahalli Ganapathi Temple. His body was found the next morning in the CDS canal, with injuries on his face and head. His bike was also found in the canal.

Police investigations revealed a troubling story. The priest's wife, Shalini Kom, was reportedly involved in an illicit relationship with tipper driver Harish M.C., a resident of the same village. She allegedly convinced Harish to kill her husband after the priest discovered the affair. On March 6, Harish, along with Santosh Kumar M.R. and Ganesh B.R., confronted the priest on a deserted road, beat him with sticks, and pushed his body and bike into the canal to make it appear like an accident.

The accused were arrested on March 10. They include Harish M.C. (33), Santosh Kumar M.R. (29), Ganesh B.R. (29), and Shalini Kom (32). Police have seized mobile phones used in planning and coordinating the murder. Harish M.C. has been produced in Srirangapatna ACJ & AMFC Court for further custody.

Dr. Shobharani V.J., Mandya Superintendent of Police, praised the investigation team for their quick and effective work. The police continue to probe the case, gathering more evidence and details. Authorities have urged the public to provide any information related to the incident to help with the investigation. The arrest brings a measure of relief to the village, but the shocking nature of the crime has left residents stunned.

Mandya invites applications for women empowerment posts

MANDYA

The District Hub for Empowerment of Women (DHEW) under the Mission Shakti Scheme in Mandya has invited applications for temporary honorarium-based posts. Eligible candidates can apply for Gender Specialist (1 post) and Program Assistant (1 post).

For the Gender Specialist, candidates must hold a degree in Social Work or Social Studies, with preference to postgraduates, and at least three years of relevant experience in government or non-government organizations. The Program Assistant must have a degree with computer knowledge and at least three years of experience in data management, registration processes, and web-based reporting.

The selection will be conducted by the District Committee, and preference will be given to candidates with experience in women's development.

Applications must be submitted separately for each post along with self-attested documents by 5:30 PM on March 25 at the Deputy Director, Women and Child Development Department, Mandya.

For details, candidates can call 08232-227336/221315.

Devotees celebrate Lakshmi Narasimhaswamy Festival

CHIKKABALLAPURA

The Sri Lakshmi Narasimhaswamy Brahmarathotsava was celebrated with great devotion at Madikere Temple on the Chintamani-Srinivasapura road. Thousands of devotees from nearby villages and distant places gathered to offer fruits, prayers, and pujas at the beautifully decorated temple.

The festival began with homavana, abhisheka, flower decoration, pradhana pooja, kalash installation, Navagraha pooja, and Nagadeva pooja. The idol of Sri Lakshmi Narasimhaswamy was then placed in a specially decorated chariot, accompanied by the sounds of Mangala Vadya and chanting of Vedas. Devotees joyfully pulled the chariot around the temple and through a double circle of the village, believing it purified their souls.

Several folk and cultural troupes performed during the procession, including Mangalavadya, Tamatevadya, Kolata, Pandari Bhajan, and other traditional arts. In the evening, attendees enjoyed the mythological drama "Sri Krishna Pandava Vijayam," which captivated the audience.

Thousands of devotees were also served refreshments like buttermilk, panaka, and kosumbari, and the temple provided meals to all participants from Chintamani and surrounding villages.

The three-day festival included flag hoisting on the first day, installation of the Kalash, Nitya Homa, and Kalyanotsava with Sridevi and Bhudevi on the second day, and the grand Brahmarathotsava on the third day. The event fostered devotion, community bonding, and cultural celebration among the people of Chikkaballapura.

The festival was coordinated by local temple authorities and devotees, with special arrangements ensuring smooth conduct of rituals and crowd management.

Kannada Sena supports Chikkaballapura bandh over water project

CHIKKABALLAPURA

The Kannada Sena has extended full support to the bandh scheduled on March 15 demanding the third stage purification of HN Valley wastewater project before releasing water into lakes in Chikkaballapura district.

Leaders of the organisation said that drought-prone districts such as Kolar, Chikkaballapura and Bengaluru Rural district have been struggling with water scarcity for several decades. They stated that untreated or partially treated sewage water from the Hebbal area is currently being released into lakes in the region after only two stages of purification.

According to Kannada Sena leaders, farmers who depend on these lakes for agriculture are facing serious problems due to poor water quality. Reports have also indicated the presence of harmful elements such as fluoride in the water used by local residents.

The people of the region have been demanding a third stage purification process for many years to ensure safe and clean water. However, they alleged that the government has not taken sufficient action despite repeated appeals.

District president V. Ravikumar, along with vice president Shravan Kumar and city president Vijayakumar, urged the government to immediately implement the third stage treatment. They said Chikkaballapura district supplies fruits, flowers, vegetables and milk to many parts of the State and the country. Ensuring clean water for lakes and agriculture is essential for protecting farmers and the future generation of the region.

The leaders appealed to the government to take immediate steps to complete the purification process and release safe water to local lakes.

Massive fire rages at Doddaballapura cable factory

CHIKKABALLAPURA

A major fire broke out at a cable manufacturing factory in Bashettahalli on the outskirts of Doddaballapura, and firefighters have been battling the flames for more than 15 hours. The fire reportedly started around 5:30 pm on Monday and quickly spread across parts of the factory. Thick smoke soon covered the surrounding area, creating panic among workers and nearby residents.

Around 15 fire engines were rushed to the spot, and more than 100 fire personnel have been working continuously through the night to control the situation. Despite their efforts, the fire had not been completely extinguished even after several hours.

Officials said the flames appear to be coming from inside the factory building, making the operation more challenging. Firefighters are spraying large amounts of water to control the smoke and prevent the fire from spreading further. Heavy smoke continues to rise from the premises, and the rescue teams are carefully monitoring the situation to avoid any further damage.

Authorities have not yet confirmed the exact cause of the fire. Fortunately, there were no immediate reports of casualties at the time of the incident.

Discussion Held on Climate Change and Its Impact on Women at Gulbarga University

KALABURAGI

The discussion witnessed the participation of seven alumni from the Department of Zoology, who shared their perspectives on the ways in which climate change is affecting women across different social and economic backgrounds. Speaking during the programme, K.S. Aishwarya, a lecturer in the Department of Zoology, highlighted that the effects of climate change are increasingly being felt by women across the world. She pointed out that gender inequality continues to exist at the global level and that several studies and reports indicate women generally have fewer resources and assets compared to men.

Aishwarya explained that this disparity makes women more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. She noted that a significant number of women belong to economically weaker sections, which makes it more difficult for them to cope with environmental challenges and natural disasters.

She further stated that climate change has multiple consequences for women, affecting them both economically and in terms of health. During extreme weather conditions such as droughts, heat waves and other natural calamities, women are often more likely to face health-related issues due to increased workloads, limited access to healthcare and other socio-economic factors.

Emphasising the need for preparedness, Aishwarya advised women to prioritise their health and financial security. She suggested that women should consider obtaining health insurance, building emergency funds and forming supportive community networks that can provide assistance during times of crisis.

EXPLORE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Students urged to learn Indian temple architecture

CHITRADURGA

Dr. Honnur Swamy, Head of the Postgraduate History and Archaeology Department at Davangere University, emphasized the importance of understanding Indian art and architecture for students in a special lecture. The program, organized by the History Department and IQAC of the Government Arts College, was held at the Postgraduate Hall of the college.

Speaking on "Indian Art and Architecture," Dr. Swamy said that studying the heritage of Indian temples, Buddhist stupas, viharas, and chaityalayas helps students grasp the basic ideas of various religions. He noted that such knowledge is not only culturally enriching but also beneficial for preparing for competitive exams in the future.

Prof. J. Kariappa, Principal of the Government Arts College, highlighted that temples and historical architecture reflect secular values and promote harmony in society. He urged students to take a deeper interest in India's ancient heritage.

Dr. B. Suresh, Head of the History Department, explained the unique features of Gandhara and Mathura art, while IQAC Convenor Prof. Tarini Shubhadayini addressed the audience on academic insights.

Other dignitaries included Secretary of the Faculty Association Prof. Hanumanthappa, Dr. Revanasiddappa, and Head of Undergraduate Studies Prof. Mahmud Basha.

The program was compered by History Professor Prof. B. Jagannath, and the welcome address was delivered by Prof. S. B. Shivaprasad. Students and faculty participated enthusiastically, showing keen interest in India's rich architectural heritage.

QUICK READ

Applications open for Ambedkar, Jagjivan Awards

Mandya

The Social Welfare Department has invited applications for the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram Awards to honor individuals who have significantly served the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities. The awards will be presented during the state-level birth anniversary celebrations of Dr. Jagjivan Ram on April 5 and Dr. Ambedkar on April 14, 2026. Interested candidates can obtain forms from the Taluk Assistant Director of Social Welfare and submit completed applications to the office by March 15. The awards aim to recognize hard work, dedication, and community service for marginalized groups.

Neelagund Durgadevi festival begins on March 18

Gadag

The Durgadevi Temple festival in Neelagund village is set to begin on Wednesday, March 18, under the divine presence of Sri Prabhu Lingadevaru of Gudneshwar Math. The festival will start with a new kalasa procession along the main streets, accompanied by traditional music. On March 19, the morning will feature the kalasarohana ritual at 8 am, followed by a rangoli competition at noon. On March 20, devotees will participate in the udi offering ceremony, and March 21 will host the agni pravesha ritual at 8 am. Evening cultural programs include Bombat Melodies and Jaibhim folk performance, entertaining local attendees.

Koppal mourns passing of Bharamareddy Dambaralli

Koppal

Bharamareddy Dambaralli (Bisaralli), aged 87, father of teacher Devareddy Dambaralli of Allahnagar School, passed away on Tuesday. He is survived by three daughters and four sons, leaving behind a grieving family. The local community and relatives expressed their condolences over his demise. The last rites will be performed on Tuesday, March 11, at 9:30 am in Alavandi village, Koppal taluk. Known for his gentle nature and strong family values, Bharamareddy will be remembered fondly by all who knew him. Family, friends, and well-wishers are invited to pay their respects.

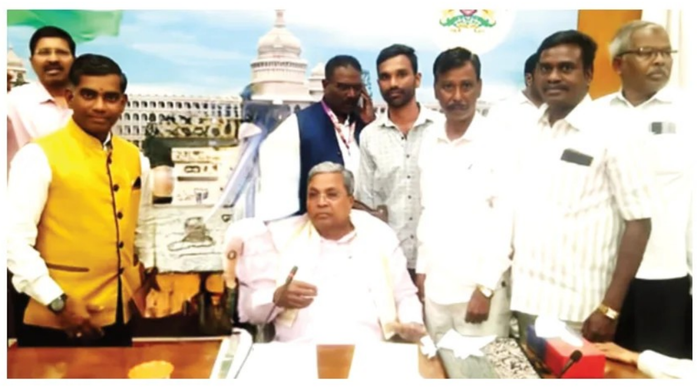
K'taka Budget announces Adivasi Development Corporation

Krishnaiah thanked the Chief Minister for addressing Adivasi needs, calling the initiative a key opportunity for their socio-economic development

HUNSUR

Karnataka Adivasi Rakshana Parishad State President M. Krishnaiah has warmly welcomed the announcement of the Adivasi Development Corporation in the 17th Budget presented by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

He said it is a significant step forward, fulfilling a long-standing demand of the Adivasi community. The announcement comes in response to a pre-budget meeting held on February 23, where the Karnataka Adivasi Rakshana Parishad had formally requested the establishment of the corporation.



Krishnaiah expressed gratitude to the Chief Minister for recognizing the needs of Adivasis and responding positively. "This initiative represents a major opportunity for the socio-economic development of Adivasis across Karnataka," he said.

Subrahmanya, president of the Taluk Adivasis Lamps Cooperative Society, added that the corporation will play a key role in integrating Adivasis into the mainstream of society. He noted that it would streamline development projects, improve access to resources, and support education, skill development, and livelihood opportunities for tribal communities.

The Adivasi Development Corporation is expected to focus on improving infrastructure, creating employment opportunities, and implementing welfare schemes targeted at the upliftment of tribal populations.

Leaders and community members have expressed hope that the new corporation will lead to tangible progress and enhance the overall well-being of Adivasis in Karnataka, making it a landmark initiative in the state's inclusive development agenda.

Ensure smooth conduct of SSLC exams: DC

R. S. Burudi said the School Education Department has prepared to conduct exams smoothly, arranging all necessary facilities at centres for students' benefit

GADAG

Deputy Commissioner C. N. Sridhar directed officials to take all necessary steps to conduct the SSLC Exam-1 in an organised and transparent manner across Gadag district.

He spoke while presiding over a pre-preparation meeting on the examination held at the Zilla Panchayat Hall in Gadag on Tuesday.

The Deputy Commissioner said strict measures must be taken to ensure that the examinations are conducted peacefully without any malpractice. Proper seating arrangements and basic facilities such as drinking water, electricity and clean surroundings should be ensured at all examination centres, he said.

According to officials, the SSLC Exam-1 will be conducted from March 18 to April 2 at 61 examination centres in the district. A total of 17,146 students are expected to appear for the examination.

Deputy Director of the School Education Department R. S. Burudi said preparations have already been made to ensure smooth conduct of the exams. He added that all required facilities are being arranged at the centres for the benefit of students.

The meeting also discussed providing adequate police security around examination centres and making proper transport arrangements so that students can travel safely to and from the exam venues.

Officials informed that prohibitory orders will be enforced around examination centres during the exam period to prevent disturbances.

Mahantesh Sajjana, DySP, J. M. Vadhamani, Principal of DIET, field education officers and heads of examination centres attended the meeting.

MLA Mane said over ₹40 c were allocated for taluk rural projects, improving public comfort and daily life

MLA Mane launches multi-crore development projects

HANAGAL

MLA Srinivas Mane today performed the ground-breaking ceremony for multiple development works across several wards of Hanagal Municipality, totaling Rs. 7.60 crore, under the Chief Minister's Infrastructure Development Program for 2025-26. The projects include construction of CC roads, CD works, and other infrastructure improvements in wards 4, 5, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 18, and 19.

Addressing the gathering, MLA Mane said he was delighted that dozens of development projects could be launched in a single day at a record cost. "More than Rs. 40 crore have already been allocated for rural areas of the taluk, and these works aim to improve the daily life and comfort of the public," he added.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by several prominent leaders and officials, including former Municipal Presidents Yallappa Kittur, Radhika Deshpande, Mamata Aregoppa, Khurshid Hullathi, Parashuram Khandunavara, and Nagappa Savadatti, former Vice President Veena Gudi, City Congress President Mateen Shirbadagi, KPCC member Talkanagouda Patil, Block Congress President Manju Gorannavara, and local leaders Adarsh Shetty, M.A.A. Badagi, Mohan Basavanthakar, Ghanshyam Deshpande, Ravi Deshpande, and Raju Gudi.

Municipal Chief Officer Y.K. Jagadish and engineers Nagaraj Mirji, Tammanna Aregoppa, and Vinay Bankanal were also present. MLA Mane urged citizens to support the projects and expressed hope that the completed works would bring lasting benefits to the municipality.

Magadi cattle fair to award best breeds

MAGADI

Progressive farmer Jutnahalli Jayaramu has urged farmers not to bring cattle to the Sri Ranganatha Swamy Temple cattle fair before the Ugadhi festival, warning that animals arriving early will not be allowed on the fairgrounds. Speaking at a press conference on Tuesday, he said the fair is organized to recognize and reward the best cattle, and early arrivals could disrupt the judging process.

This year, prizes will be awarded for the first time in nearly a year. The Sri Ranganatha Swamy Cattle Fair Committee has formed an eight-member veterinarian panel to select the top cattle fairly and without bias. Cash prizes of Rs. 7,500 will be awarded in categories for cattle with 2, 4, and 6 teeth, along with a common prize for four pairs of cattle. Champion prizes of three grams of gold will also be given to five pairs in each category.

Officials from the Animal Husbandry Department of other districts will participate in the judging. There is no entry fee for cattle; only vehicles bringing animals will be charged. Taluk administration and local organizations will provide drinking water, lighting, and toilets for animals tied on the grounds.

Marish Magadi, committee member, emphasized the fair's reputation across South India, and former TAPCAAS President Honnappa praised the initiative. Farmer leaders Manju, Gagan, Balaji, Srinivas, Ammid Pasha, and Tagachakuppe Narayanappa also attended the announcement.

₹30 cr sewerage work planned: Dr. Kumar

MANDYA

Sewerage development works worth about ₹30 crore are being implemented within the limits of Mandya Municipal Corporation under various government schemes, said Deputy Commissioner Dr. Kumar.

He was speaking while presiding over a District Level Implementation Committee meeting held at the Municipal Corporation hall regarding projects under Swachh Bharat Mission (City) 2.0 and the water management project supported by the environmental compensation fund of the National Green Tribunal.

Under the project, the wastewater treatment plant located on Yathagadahalli Road in Mandya city will be upgraded and its capacity increased to 10 MLD. The wastewater treatment plant at Chikkegowdanadoddi will also be upgraded to improve the city's sewage management system.

Officials said a 2.72 km outfall sewer line will be installed using pipes of different diameters. In addition, a 462-metre UPVC pipeline will be laid, primary treatment plants will be upgraded, wet wells will be modernised and 83 HP sludge pumps will be installed.

The project also includes complete maintenance of the wastewater treatment plants at Yathagadahalli and Chikkegowdanadoddi for five years.

The work order for the project was issued in March 2025 by the Karnataka Urban Infrastructure Development and Finance Corporation to Nakshatra Infrastructure Development Corporation, based in Bengaluru.

The Deputy Commissioner expressed dissatisfaction over the slow progress of the work and directed officials to speed up the implementation and complete it within the scheduled time.

Revathi Shetty leads Women's Day celebration

HUNSUR

The World Women's Day celebration at D. Devaraja Urs Government First Grade College in Hunsur began with literary writer Revathi Shetty planting saplings, symbolizing growth and empowerment.

She highlighted the long struggle of women for equality and equal rights, emphasizing that the movement has successfully gained global attention.

Revathi Shetty said true women's empowerment comes when women stand tall with self-respect and confidence. She stressed that the essence of Women's Day is to honor oneself and recognize the strength of being a woman.

The program was attended by dignitaries including H.C. Hema Malini, Deputy Director of Indira Gandhi Open University, Bangalore, Principal Dr. B.C. Suresh, and members of the Mysore District Journalists' Association, along with journalists Dharmapura Narayan, Dr. H.L. Shobha, Kavita, Basavaraju, Dr. H.L. Divya, Dr. M.R. Rashi, and Prof. Vasanthkumar.

The event inspired students and participants to embrace self-respect and continue advocating for gender equality.

Convict sentenced for kidnapping minor girl

KOPPAL

The Additional District and Sessions Judge and Fast Track Court (POCSO) Judge Kumar D.K. sentenced Manjunatha Chikkagoudra of Vajrabandi village to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs. 70,000 for kidnapping and raping a minor girl from the Scheduled Tribe.

According to the court, the accused had been in love with the victim for three years. On March 17, 2024, he lured her near a godown in Vajrabandi village, picked her up on his motorcycle, and traveled through Bangalore and Mysore before returning to Koppal. He then secured a room at Partha Lodge under false pretenses, claiming they were siblings, and forcibly assaulted the girl.

The case was reported to PSI Vijaypratap of Yelaburga Police Station, who conducted the initial investigation. Further investigation was carried out by DSP Muthanna Savaragol and Siddalingappa Gowda Patil, with assistance from CHC Shivakumar. The charge sheet was submitted, and the case was registered as Special SC (POCSO) No. 24/2024.

Special Public Prosecutor Gouramma Desai represented the government in court. The judge found the charges against Manjunatha proven and delivered the verdict on March 5.

AU SMALL FINANCE BANK LIMITED
Head Office - Jaipur

Public Notice for shifting of Premises.

Our Pandavapura branch, which is presently functioning at No. 1061/2280/A-1, Ground Floor, KRS Main Road, Pandavapura, Karnataka - 571434 will be shifted to the following address with effect from 13th April 2026

New Address

AU SMALL FINANCE BANK LIMITED
First Floor, Old Taluk Office Road Opposite TAPCMS society
Pandavapura, Karnataka - 571434

Place: Pandavapura, Karnataka
Date: 11th March 2026

Branch Manager
Karnataka

Demand to recognize civil workers as staff

HUNSUR

Sanitation workers who maintain cleanliness and protect public health in society should be recognised as full government employees, said K. D. Shaila, president of the Karnataka State Civil Service Employees Association.

She spoke after inaugurating the Women's Day celebration organised by the association at Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Bhavan in Hunsur. She said sanitation workers serve the public from early morning till late evening and play a vital role in keeping cities clean and healthy.

However, many of them are still treated as semi-government or outsourced workers. Because of this status, they are unable to receive many government benefits given to regular employees. She said the association has already brought this issue to the attention of the State government and demanded that sanitation workers should be recognised as government employees and provided with all necessary benefits.

Shaila also appealed that separate rest rooms must be built for women sanitation workers in all taluks and towns and proper facilities should be provided for them.

Municipal Council Commissioner M. Manasa said sanitation workers perform the same duties as permanent employees but still face discrimination in salary and benefits. She expressed regret that the government has not yet recognised them as full employees.

Delivering the keynote address, teacher and writer Dr. Madhu Prasad said women should be treated equally and given proper opportunities in all fields. He stressed that education is essential for women to grow and contribute to society and the nation. Several officials and association members including Soumya Lokesh, Sharadamma and Rachaiah Madhusudhan were present during the programme.

CH CLASSIFIEDS

To place a classified ad contact: **080-41209042**

CHANGE OF NAME

I, UDHAYA KUMAR S/o BHEEMARAJ SALAI R/o Capital Green Times, Flat No 102, 3rd Main Road, Ashirvad Colony, Horamavu, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560043, have changed the name of my minor daughter LISHIKA aged 8 years and she shall hereafter be known as LISHIKA UDHAYA KUMAR.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, UMA BUSANURMATH D/o SHADAKSHARAYYA HIREMATH, W/o JAGADISHWARAYYA, R/o H No 363, 1st Block, Near Hiremalligwad Bus Stop, K H B Colony, Hiremalligawad, Chikkamalligawad, Dharwad, Karnataka-580007, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as MAHADEVI HIREMATH.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **PADMAVATHI S.V.** W/o S. Nagaraj, residing at: Doddasanne Village and Post, Devanahalli Taluk, Bengaluru-562110, Bangalore Rural Dist, today at Ramanagara do hereby solemnly affirm and state on oath before Notary T V Indira, Ramanagara, dated: 10-03-2026, that my correct name is **PADMAVATHI S.V**. as in my Aadhar Card and Pan Card. But in my Passport my name mentioned as **PADMAVATHI** instead of **PADMAVATHI S.V.** above both names belongs to one and same my name only. And my husband correct name is **S. NAGARAJ** as in my all documents. But in my passport my husband name mentioned as **NAGARAJU S**. instead of **S.NAGARAJ**. Above two names are one and same my husband name only.

AFFIDAVIT

I, TENZIN NAMGEY, S/o Lama Wangdi Mehto, residining at Gyudmed tantric University, Gurupura Lama camp, Gurupura village, Hanagodu Hobali, Hunsur Taluk, Mysore District- 571105. As per Aadhar card my correct name is TENZIN NAMGEY, but in Passport No: H5243980 it is mentioned TENZIN NAMSEY MEHTO, but my correct name is TENZIN NAMGEY, I declare that both names refer to me and belong solely to me. I affirm that the facts stated above are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief, vide affidavit dated: 09.03.2026, before Notary H.DINESH, Hunsur.

IN THE COURT OF THE ADDITIONAL CIVIL JUDGE AND JMFC AT DODDABALLAPURA
Crl. misc. No. 421/2025

BETWEEN: 1. Sri. Ramakrishana. K, S/o Late. Kenchappa, aged about 70 years, **2. Smt. Hanumakka,** D/o Late. Kenchappa, aged about 79 years, **3. Smt. Kempamma,** D/o Late. Kenchappa, aged about 77 years, **4. Smt. Rathnamma,** W/o Late. Linganna, aged about 72 years, **5. Smt. Parvathamma,** D/o Late. Kenchappa, aged about 73 years, All are R/at, No.361, Hanabe Village, Doddabelavangala Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk, Bangalore Rural District ...**Petitioners**

AND: The Tahasildar, Doddaballapura, Doddaballapura Taluk ...**Respondent**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas the petitioners have filed the above petition under section 13 (3) and 14 of Registration of Birth and Death act 1969 for seeking the death certificate of the Father of petitioner by name late **Sri. Kenchappa** S/o Late. Chikkahanumaiah who died on date. 25/06/1984 at Hanabe Village, Doddaballapura Taluk, Bangalore Rural district.

In this regard it is hereby notice that whoever as interested in the said matter may appear in person or through an advocate duly authorized before the above said court on **07/04/2026** in default this matter will be heard and disposed of an ex-parte order.

Given under by hand and seal of the court on this 10/03/2026

By order of the Court, Chief Ministerial Officer, Prl. Civil Judge & JMFC, Doddaballapura

N. BASAVARAJU, Advocate
BSS LAW CHAMBER
Near Civil Court Complex, Doddaballapura.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Rajashekar son of T.P. Nair, residing at Ward No. 30, No. 1458, Near Water Tank, Ramanagara Town, Ijoor, Bangalore South District, Iam the owner and iam in possession of the following property.

The said property is Municipal Kaneshumari No. 6644/3709, belonging to Ijoor Layout, Ramanagara Town, and is Site No. 13, measuring East-West 45 feet, North-South 30 feet and bounded by: East: Site No. 12, West: Site No. 14, North: Site No. 42, South: Municipal Road. The Orginal purchase deed of this attached property is Registration No.: 1872/1980-81, and was registered on 15-10-1980 in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Ramanagara.

The original document of the above property was accidentally lost while cleaning the house while it was being kept in the house. A complaint was filed with the Bangalore South District Police Department on 09-03-2026 regarding the loss of the said document, vide Lost Report No. 2100636/2026.

The said orginal purchase deed has not been used for any malicious purpose. If anyone comes across the said document, it is requested to deliver it to the following address.

Contact Address:
Rajashekhar S/o T.P. Nair,
No. 1458, Ward No. 30, Near Water Tank, Ijoor, Ramanagara Town, Bangalore South District.
Mobile: 8971828964

QUICK READ

Rahul Gandhi attends wedding of farmer's daughter in Haryana

CHANDIGARH

Congress MP Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday reached Madina village in Haryana's Sonipat to attend a wedding of a farmer's daughter. At the wedding ceremony, Rahul, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, sat on mattresses among family members. The women sitting beside him sang songs and Rahul occasionally asked questions about the folk songs and rituals. The Gandhi scion stayed for about half an hour at the ceremony. Bride's aunt Kirti Jakhar told the media that Rahul was curious to know about the wedding culture and rituals performed at weddings. She said Rahul ate 'churma' and drank a glass of milk.

Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi questions Chair's authority

NEW DELHI

Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi on Tuesday raised procedural and constitutional objections in the Lok Sabha during the ongoing discussion on the resolution seeking a no-confidence motion against Speaker Om Birla. Participating in the debate, Gogoi cited parliamentary rules and said that the Speaker should not preside over proceedings when a resolution seeking his removal from office is under consideration. He said that the Speaker appoints a panel of chairpersons and questioned how it had been decided that Jagdambika Pal would preside over the House during the discussion on the resolution. According to Gogoi, there was no official record placed before the House from the panel of chairpersons explaining the decision.

Opposition backs Kirti Azad over trophy temple visit row

NEW DELHI

Several Opposition leaders on Tuesday expressed support for Trinamool Congress MP and former cricketer Kirti Azad after his social media post questioning the decision to take the T20 World Cup trophy to a temple. Opposition leaders said Azad had raised an important concern and stressed that it was essential to ensure that the sentiments of people from all faiths are respected. The controversy erupted after Azad, who was a member of India's 1983 World Cup-winning team, criticised the act of taking the trophy to a temple by cricketer Suryakumar Yadav, head coach and former BJP MP Gautam Gambhir, and International Cricket Council (ICC) chairman Jay Shah.

Guv-designate Shukla arrives in Hyd, set to take oath today

Currently serving as the Governor of Himachal Pradesh, Shukla will replace Jishnu Dev Varma, who has been appointed as the Governor of Maharashtra

HYDERABAD

The arrival of Shiv Pratap Shukla marked an important administrative transition for Telangana as the state prepares to welcome its new Governor.

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy personally received Shukla at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA), accompanied by several senior government officials. Among those present were Industries and IT Minister D Sridhar Babu, Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao, Director General of Police B. Shivadhar Reddy and other senior officers.

Shukla was appointed as the Governor of Telangana by President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday. He is expected to formally assume office after taking the oath of office on Wednesday in Hyderabad.

Currently serving as the Governor of Himachal Pradesh, Shukla will replace Jishnu Dev Varma, who has been appointed as the Governor of Maharashtra. Varma had assumed charge as the Governor of Telangana on July 31, 2024, and served the state for a brief period.

Earlier this week, Jishnu Dev Varma was accorded a warm farewell by the Telangana administration. Chief Secretary Ramakrishna Rao, Hyderabad District Collector Harichandana Dasari, Special Chief Secretary Dana Kishore, and other officials gathered to bid farewell to the outgoing Governor and his family members.

Shiv Pratap Shukla brings with him decades of experience in public life and governance. He was sworn in as the Governor of Himachal Pradesh on February 18, 2023, before being reassigned to Telangana.

Born on April 1, 1952, in Rudrapur village of Gorakhpur district in Uttar Pradesh, Shukla was actively involved in student politics during his early years. He was associated with the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) during his student days.

Shukla formally joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 1983 and entered electoral politics soon after. He was first elected to the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly from the Gorakhpur Nagar constituency in 1989 and was re-elected in 1991.

During his tenure in Uttar Pradesh, he served as Minister of State with independent charge of the Basic Education, Adult Education, and Language Department in the government led by Chief Minister Kalyan Singh. In addition, he also handled several important portfolios, including Horticulture, Sports, Youth Welfare, and Food Processing, gaining wide administrative experience over the years.

Oppn protests in Jharkhand Assembly over Law and order, corruption

RANCHI

Soon after the Assembly convened for the day, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) legislators stormed into the well of the House carrying posters and raising slogans against the state government.

The opposition members demanded an immediate discussion on what they described as rising corruption and the deteriorating law and order situation in Jharkhand.

The atmosphere in the House grew tense when AJSU Party MLA Nirmal Mahto was ordered to be marshalled out by the Speaker after a confrontation during the debate. Assembly marshals escorted him out following the Speaker's directive. However, after discussions among members and the restoration of some order in the House, Mahto was later recalled.

Leader of the Opposition Babulal Marandi strongly criticised the state government, alleging that corruption had become rampant and that no work in the state was being carried out without payment of bribes. He also raised serious concerns over the law and order situation, citing several incidents as examples of administrative failure.

Marandi referred to the recent firing incident targeting labour union leaders in Dumka, the alleged assault by policemen on a devotee at the Rajrappa temple, and an incident in Giridih where a Deputy Commissioner was accused of misbehaving with women protesters during a Women's Day programme.

He remarked that the government could no longer be called an Abua Sarkar, meaning a government of the people, but had instead turned into a Babua Sarkar, implying that it was being run by officials rather than public representatives.

According to Marandi, criminals in the state had become fearless while officers were functioning without restraint. He insisted that the Assembly should hold a detailed discussion on these issues before taking up any other legislative business.

Responding to the allegations, Finance Minister Radha Krishna Kishore defended the government, stating that the law and order situation in Jharkhand was fully under control. He asserted that the state government was following a strict zero-tolerance policy towards corruption.

GOYAL URGES STAKEHOLDERS TO HELP MAKE INDIA WORLD'S LARGEST EXPORTER

NEW DELHI

Speaking at the inauguration of the 40th edition of 'AAHAR The International Food & Hospitality Fair' in New Delhi, Goyal said India's food and agricultural exports including farm produce and fisheries have reached nearly Rs 5 lakh crore annually, equivalent to more than $55 billion.

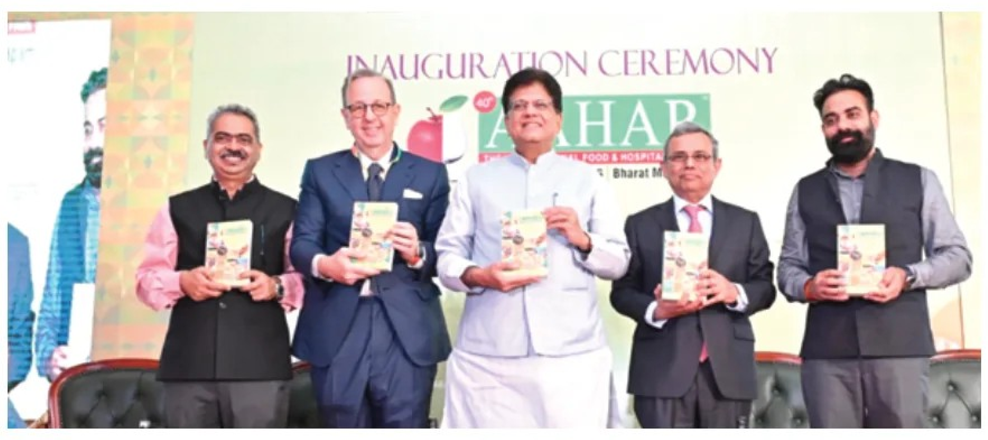
He noted that this achievement has made India the seventh largest exporter of agricultural produce in the world.

The minister pointed out that the country has witnessed remarkable growth in agri and food exports over the last decade. Between 2014 and 2025, India's agricultural and food exports have expanded significantly across multiple sectors. According to Goyal, exports of processed foods have increased fourfold during this period, reflecting the growing global demand for value-added food products from India.

He further said that exports of fruits and pulses have tripled, while processed vegetable exports have grown four times. Cocoa exports have also recorded a threefold increase, while cereal exports have doubled over the past eleven years. Rice exports alone have registered a growth of 62 per cent, strengthening India's position as a major global supplier of staple food grains.

Goyal said these achievements should inspire the country to aim for the top position globally in agricultural and processed food exports. He emphasised that India has the potential to become a global leader in this sector, aligning with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of transforming the country into the food basket of the world.

Highlighting the role of trade agreements in boosting exports, the minister said that India has concluded nine Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) in the past three and a half years. These agreements have opened access to 38 developed and prosperous countries, creating vast market opportunities for Indian exporters and businesses.



Goyal also noted that India currently enjoys preferential market access covering nearly two-thirds of global trade. This, he said, significantly strengthens India's position as an attractive destination for global investments and enables Indian companies to integrate more effectively into international value chains.

He urged industry leaders, exporters, farmers, and food processing companies to leverage these opportunities and work together to expand India's presence in global agricultural and food markets. According to him, collaborative efforts between the government and industry will play a crucial role in achieving the vision of making India a leading global supplier of high-quality food products.

RS: Kharge clashes with LS Chairman over 'vote chori', SIR

NEW DELHI

Minutes after the Upper House convened for the second day, proceedings were disrupted as Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge raised concerns about the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise of electoral rolls.

Kharge alleged that the voter verification drive was plagued with irregularities and malpractices in several states.

He claimed that the exercise, which is intended to verify and update voter lists ahead of elections, was being misused and was riddled with procedural flaws. Describing the process as a fraud, Kharge said the revision drive was being manipulated in multiple states to influence election outcomes. His remarks prompted an immediate response from Rajya Sabha Chairman C.P. Radhakrishnan, who strongly objected to the allegation. The Chairman refused to accept Kharge's claim and interrupted him, stating that such accusations could not be made without proper evidence. In Tamil Nadu, it is not, Radhakrishnan said while rejecting the allegation. He also declined to allow the Leader of the Opposition to continue with what he described as uncorroborated claims against the electoral process. As the exchange between Kharge and the Chairman intensified, Congress members rallied behind the Leader of the Opposition. Several MPs raised slogans in support of Kharge and demanded that the issue be discussed in the House, leading to noisy scenes and disruption of proceedings.

Government of Karnataka
Panchayath Raj Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer, Hassan Division Hassan.
SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION NO -27/2025-26
Dated : 06.03.2026

The tender are invited by the Executive Engineer, Panchayath Raj Engineering Division Hassan on be-half of the Governor of Karnataka through KPPP portal for the following works are sanctioned under the head of account of 2025-26TH CMIDP Grant The work details are available in the www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in portal. Sl.No.INDENT Number 01.INDENT NO:RDPR/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT25298 Amount Put to Tender In lakhs Rs.208.38 lakhs 02.INDENT NO:RDPR/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT25288 Amount Put to Tender In lakhs Rs.200.95 lakhs 03.INDENT NO:RDPR/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT25292 Amount Put to Tender In lakhs Rs.207.04 lakhs THE IMPORTANT DATES ARE AS FOLLOWS Bid Submission Start Date 09.03.2026 16.00 hours Last Date & Time for Tender Queries/Clarifications 20.03.2026 16.00 hours Last Date & Time for receipt of tenders 23.03.2026 16.00 hours Date & Time for Opening of Technical Bid 24.03.2026 16.05 hours Date & Time for Opening of Financial Bid After approval of Technical bid

sd/- Executitive Engineer,
P.R.E.Division, Hassan.
ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ಹಸನಿ/ಹಾಸನ/1163/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26

BENGALURU CENTRAL CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer, Chamarajpet Division,
2nd Main, T.R. Mill Road, Chamarajapet, Bengaluru-560018
Contact No. 9480688278/9481033253, Email : bbmpcmp@gmail.com
No. EE/CMP/TEND/22/2025-26 Date : 10-03-2026
SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Single Cover System) (Through GOK KPP Portal Only)

Tender for the following works on Item rate basis are invited as per Standard Bid Documents KW-1 & 2, by the Executive Engineer, Chamarajpet Division, Zone-2, BCCC on behalf of the Commissioner, BCCC from the registered contractors of Bengaluru Central City Corporation / KPWD / Electrical / CPWD / Railways / MES / National Highway or any State Govt. Organization may apply through KPPP Portal as per schedule of events.

Sl.	Name of the Work
1	Preparation of Safety measures on occassion of Honourable Chief Minister of Karnataka visit to Ramzan Festival Prayer at Edgah Mydan Chamarajpet Ward No. 158. **Approximate Value of works :** Rs. 5.50 Lakhs. **EMD :** Rs. 13,750/-

Calendar of Events : (1) Tender documents may be downloaded from Government of Karnataka Public Procurement Portal website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** **(2)** Last Date for uploading the Filled Proposals is : **18-03-2026 up to 16:00 hours. (3)** Date of Opening of Financial Proposals is **19-03-2026 after 17:00 hours.**

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Chamarajpet-Division,
Bengaluru Central City Corporation

Oppn stages walkout in RS over SIR

NEW DELHI

Proceedings in the Rajya Sabha turned chaotic on Tuesday as Opposition members staged a walkout amid heated exchanges over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, currently underway in several states by the Election Commission of India (ECI). Later the Chairman adjourned the House till late in the afternoon. The SIR exercise, aimed at purifying voter lists by verifying eligibility and removing ineligible entries, has sparked sharp political divisions ahead of upcoming Assembly polls. Leader of the House, J.P. Nadda, strongly condemned the Opposition's actions, accusing them of deliberately avoiding substantive debate. The Opposition doesn't want actual discussion inside the House, Nadda remarked. He pointed out that a detailed debate on electoral reforms had already taken place, during which ample time was provided to all members. Despite this, he said, the Opposition continued to raise the SIR issue repeatedly. They have walked out again and show no interest in constructive dialogue, Nadda added, echoing similar criticisms he made the previous day. The trouble began when Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge labelled the SIR process a fraud, prompting immediate intervention from Chairman Radhakrishnan.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE MARKET COMMITTEE, CHITTAPUR–585 211
E-mail :chittapurapmc@gmail.com Office Ph : 08472-236134
No.AMD/APMC/CHI/DEV/659/2025-26 Date:07-03-2026
:: E-TENDER NOTIFICATION ::

APMC, Chittapur hereby invites 2025-26 RIDF-31 from eligible e-portal registered PWD contractors in Two cover system as per Karnataka Transparency Act 2000 through e-procurement portal. The contractors have to submit all tender related documents, itemized rates etc. by uploading through **http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** website in standard Tender documents. (With latest amendments)
1) Pre bid/Clarification meeting: **07-04-2026 11:00 AM,** 2) Last date for the submission of filled in E-Tender applications: **10-04-2026 upto 4.00 PM**, 3) Date of opening of Technical bid : **13-04-2026 upto 4.00 PM,** 4) Date of opening of Financial bid (if Possible): **24-04-2026 upto 4.00 PM**, 5) Place of opening of E-Tender bid: Office of the Secretary, Agricultural Produce Market Committee, Chittapur.
1) Name Of Work : **CONSTRUCTION OF RAITH BHAVAN AT CHITTAPURA MARKET YARD AND CONSTRUCTION ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE, CC ROAD AND DRAIN AT SHAHABAD SUB MARKET YARD OF APMC CHITTAPURA UNDER RIDF-31 SCHEME 2025-26,** 2) Approximate value Of Work (in Rs.): **4,16,13,898.00** (Excluding G.S.T), 3) Earnest Money Deposit (in Rs.): 6,25,000.00, 4) Tender Document : KW-4, 5) Tender Processing Fee (In Rs.): As per KPPP, 6) Period of Completion (Excluding Monsoon): 165 Days
Any other information required can be obtained from the office of the Secretary, Agricultural Produce Market Committee, Chittapur during working days and hours or through website **http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**

Sd/- Secretary, APMC Chittapur
Sd/- Administrator, APMC Chittapur
DIPR/Kalaburagi/1154/KSMC&A/2025-26

Executive Engineer
Public Works Department,
No. 1, Buildings Division, SJP Campus, Bengaluru
Ph: 080-22255210
No.: EE/Bld.1/AE-4/2025-26/82 Date: 07.03.2026
Invitation for Tender (IFT)

The above Department invites Tenders through e-procurement portal of GoK (**http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in)** from eligible Tenderers for below mentioned works. **Name of work: 1)** Proposed Renovation Work of Mysuru Maharaja Choultry at Tiruchanoor, Tirupathi. Tender Reference: (PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT33697) (Call-1) **(Reserved for Others).** Approx. value of work: **Rs. 308.14 lakhs.** EMD: **Rs. 4,62,300/-** (Rs. 1,00,000/- through e-procurement. Balance Amount Rs. 3,62,300/- through BG, FDR, Bankers Certificate). Period of Completion: **9 Months** (including rainy season). **2)** Arresting leakages from expansion joints at 4th floor and terrace at 4th & 7th floor by providing grouting, cracks filling, water proofing and other allied works at New Kumara Krupa Guest House, Kumara Krupa Road, Bengaluru. Tender Reference: (PWD/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT30266) (Call 2) **(Reserved for Cat-IIA)** Approx. value of work: **Rs. 40.70 lakhs.** EMD: **Rs. 40,710/-** Period of Completion: **2 Months** (including rainy season). Cost of Document: As per KPP Portal. Last date for downloading Tender through e-procurement portal and submission through online: **16.03.2026 up to 4.00 PM.** Date of opening the Tender: KPP Portal guidelines. Further information and other details can be obtained from the above office or from e-procurement portal **http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Executive Engineer
DIPR/DD-C.P/6122/KSMCA/2025-26

QUICK READ

Will inaugurate, lay foundation for devpt projects today: Modi

CHENNAI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said he will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for a slew of development projects covering petroleum, natural gas, roads, railways and other infrastructure sectors in Tiruchirappalli tomorrow (March 11). Sharing details of the upcoming initiatives on social media platform X, Prime Minister Modi wrote: In Tiruchirappalli tomorrow, I will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for development projects covering petroleum, natural gas, roads, railways and more. The key projects include the foundation stone for the BPCL City Gas Distribution Network in the Nilgiris and Erode districts. 89 rural road projects will also be inaugurated.

BLO in Bengal's Kakdwip gets threat calls after voter names deleted

KOLKATA

A Booth Level Officer (BLO) in West Bengal's Kakdwip, on Tuesday, approached the state administration after he received threats from a voter of his area after his name was deleted following the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise. BLO Manindranath Das has been allegedly receiving threatening calls ever since the publication of the final voter list during the first phase of SIR on February 28. A similar threat call was received by the BLO on Monday night. Later, the door of his house's room located on second floor was broken by a brick thrown at his house.

₹227 cr allocated for police modernisation in 2025-26: Rai

'The Central govt has allocated ₹227.42 crore until February 24 in the 2025–26 financial year for the modernisation of police forces across states and UTs'

NEW DELHI

The Centre allocated Rs 227.42 crore till February 24 in 2025-26 for modernisation of police forces in States and Union Territories, the Lok Sabha was informed on Tuesday. Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs Nityanand Rai, in a written reply, said that under the Assistance to States & UTs for Modernisation of Police (ASUMP) scheme, major infrastructure and technology upgrades have been proposed/completed since 2021-22.

In 2024-25, funds released/utilised stood at Rs 117.15 crore; in 2023-24, it was Rs 52.30 crore; in 2022-23, it was Rs 36.69 crore, and in

2021-22, it was Rs 158.57 crore.

The upgradation projects undertaken under the ASUMP include upgradation of the communication network through satellite-based communication network terminals (POLNET Fly Away Terminal), improvement of response time through the Integrated Command and Control Centre with the latest equipment, procurement of advanced weaponry, upgradation of forensic capabilities with procurements of equipment like digital forensic kits and advanced cyber forensic tools.

The Minister of State said 'police' and 'public order' are State subjects as per the seventh Schedule of the Constitution, and it is the responsibility of the respective state government to assess the policing efficiency and crime detection in the State.

He said that the Centre supplements State/UTs' efforts through the Assistance to States & UTs for Modernisation of Police (ASUMP) scheme, which helps States/UTs to strengthen police infrastructure at the cutting-edge level by equipping police stations with modern technology.

This was stated by the Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Nityanand Rai, in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha.

The MoS was replying to a question by BJP MP from Nizamabad, Telangana, Arvind Dharmapuri.

The MP had asked the Union Home Ministry whether the government has assessed improvements in policing efficiency and crime detection.

Women govt employees to get 'come early-go early' benefit: Sunetra

MUMBAI

In a move aimed at improving work-life balance for women employees, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Ajit Pawar on Tuesday announced a new 'Come Early–Go Early' policy for female government staff in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR).

In a major move to support working women, Maharashtra's first woman Deputy Chief Minister, Sunetra Ajit Pawar, on Tuesday announced a new 'Come Early-Go Early' policy for female government employees in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR).

The announcement was made in the Legislative Council in her reply to a special discussion following International Women's Day.

Under this new initiative, women employees can opt to arrive at work between 9:15 AM and 9:45 AM.

By starting early, they will be permitted to leave the office 30 minutes ahead of the standard closing time.

This decision aims to provide significant relief to women by helping them avoid the heavy rush of peak-hour traffic and overcrowded local trains, stated Sunetra Pawar.

The Deputy Chief Minister outlined a comprehensive roadmap for women's empowerment, focusing on safety, economic independence, and health.

Female government employees are now eligible for 180 days of maternity leave. Additionally, they can avail up to one year of half-pay leave without a medical certificate if required post-delivery. Through 'Operation Muskan,' the state has successfully traced 42,594 children between July 2015 and February 2026. Specialised 'Missing Cells' and 51 'Bharosa Cells' are currently operational across all districts to address women's grievances, she said.

Pawar further said the government is aggressively implementing schemes like 'Ladki Bahin', 'Namo Mahila Sakshami-karan', and 'Lakhpati Didi'. To support entrepreneurs, products from Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are being marketed via Umed Malls, Umed Marts, and online platforms.

The 'Adishakti Abhiyan' has been launched to curb child marriage, reduce school dropout rates among girls, and create 'abuse-free villages' in rural Maharashtra. Dedicated systems have been installed at major railway hubs, CSMT, Churchgate, and Borivali, to prevent cyber crimes against women, she added.

Responding to suggestions from various Council members, Pawar reaffirmed the government's commitment to the Fourth Women's Policy.

She emphasised that empowerment must be social, cultural, and mental, not just financial.

We must strengthen our resolve to build a society that offers dignity, opportunity, and safety to every woman, she urged, drawing inspiration from iconic figures like Mata Jijau, Savitribai Phule, and Ahilyabai Holkar.

MP Cabinet approves wheat bonus, welfare schemes

BHOPAL

One of the key decisions taken during the Cabinet meeting was to provide additional financial support to farmers.

The Cabinet approved a bonus of Rs 40 per quintal over the central Minimum Support Price (MSP) of Rs 2,585 for wheat procurement. With this decision, the effective procurement price for wheat in the state will increase to Rs 2,625 per quintal.

According to officials, this is the first time the state government has announced such a bonus for wheat farmers. The move is also seen as the beginning of a phased increase aimed at fulfilling the government's manifesto promise of providing a bonus of Rs 700 per quintal to farmers. In addition to wheat, the Cabinet also approved a bonus of Rs 100 per quintal for black gram (urad), further extending support to pulse farmers in the state. The government has also declared 2026

as the Farmer Welfare Year. As part of this initiative, yearlong programmes will be conducted across the state to promote advanced agricultural technologies and encourage farmers to adopt modern farming practices. The initiative will also focus on ensuring that farmers receive fair value for their produce, building upon the success of the Bhavantar (price-difference) scheme.

During the meeting, the Cabinet congratulated two youths from Madhya Pradesh who secured positions among the top 10 in the latest Indian Administrative Service (IAS) examinations. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav highlighted the achievements of the state's youth and noted the growing presence of talented candidates from Madhya Pradesh in national-level examinations.

The Cabinet also approved a major decision under the Swamitva Yojana.

The state government will waive stamp duty for the free registration of property ownership documents for approximately 46 lakh families who currently lack legal documentation for their homes.

India gaining more weight as wise actor in all circumstances: Italian envoy

NEW DELHI

Italy's Ambassador to India, Antonio Bartoli on Tuesday highlighted the urgent need to end the ongoing conflict in West Asia, stating that both India and Italy are on the same page and continue to bat for holding a dialogue to stop the war as soon as possible. Bartoli said that it was important that the conflict in West Asia ends soon to ensure the regularity and stability of energy resources at reasonable prices. Italy and India have the same priorities in this war, which is to encourage the parties to de-escalation, diplomatic dialogue, pacification, so to stop the war as soon as possible.

Farooq Abdullah visits Iranian embassy, offers condolences on Khamenei's death

SRINAGAR

According to a statement issued by the National Conference, Farooq Abdullah expressed deep condolences and solidarity with the people of Iran during his visit to the embassy.

The former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister conveyed sympathies on behalf of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

An NC spokesperson said that Abdullah signed the condolence book at the Iranian Embassy and paid tribute to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, referring to him as the spiritual and supreme leader of Iran.

Dr. Farooq Abdullah, President of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, today visited the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in New Delhi and signed the condolence book on the martyrdom of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. He conveyed heartfelt sympathies and condolences on behalf of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, the spokesperson said.

Farooq Abdullah was accompanied by several Members of Parliament from the National Conference during the visit. The delegation included Chowdry Mohammad Ramzan, Sajjad Ahmed Kichloo and Gurwinder Singh Oberoi.

During their visit, the delegation also met the Deputy Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to India and expressed solidarity with the Iranian people during what they described as a difficult period of grief.

They also prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed their support to the people of Iran in the wake of the incident.

The visit by the National Conference delegation came a day after Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti also visited the Iranian embassy in New Delhi to express condolences over the death of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Meanwhile, news of the Iranian leader's death triggered protests in several parts of the Kashmir Valley. Demonstrations were reported shortly after reports of the air strikes on Tehran and the killing of the Iranian Supreme Leader reached the region.

GUJARAT ATS SEIZES 22 KG ETOMIDATE, ARRESTS 2 MORE IN ILLEGAL EXPORT CASE

AHMEDABAD

The Gujarat Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) has arrested two more individuals and seized 22 kg of etomidate as part of an ongoing investigation into an alleged racket exporting the anaesthetic drug abroad under false labels through air cargo from Mumbai, officials said on Tuesday.

Providing the details, officials said the case was initially registered on March 7 after investigators received intelligence that consignments of etomidate powder were being exported to Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and other countries by misdeclaring them as other products and using forged documentation.

According to the ATS, the shipments were falsely labelled as aloe vera powder and Ginopol-24 powder, with fake invoices and forged customs clearance papers prepared to facilitate export through Mumbai airport.

The agency had earlier arrested Nikunj Gadhiya (28), a Surat-based businessman residing in Katargam, in connection with the case.

Investigators have arrested two other accused -- Chetan Vavadiya (28) and Bhaumik Padmani (32) -- during the probe on March 8. Officials said searches were conducted at the offices of the companies linked to the accused, where investigators examined purchase bills and stock registers of etomidate.

The documents allegedly confirmed that the substance had been mislabelled and misdeclared before being sent abroad.

During questioning, Gadhiya disclosed that on February 28, he had arranged to send six parcels weighing 25.5 kg, of which 22 kg contained etomidate, through air cargo destined for Malaysia.

The parcels were later intercepted and examined in Mumbai by investigators using a Raman spectrograph drug detector kit, which confirmed the presence of the substance.

The case has been registered under Sections 336(2), 336(3), 338, 340(2) and 350(1) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, and further investigation is underway.

Passport offices in many districts receive bomb threats

JAIPUR

Panic spread across more than 10 cities in Rajasthan onTuesday after several government offices received bomb threats. The threats were received by passport offices and post offices, prompting immediate concern among police and security agencies. As soon as the information was received, authorities rushed to the sites, evacuated the premises, and launched extensive search operations. According to reports, passport offices in Banswara, Sikar, Jodhpur, and Jaisalmer districts received bomb threats on Tuesday.

Head Post Offices in Ajmer and Bikaner, as well as a post office in Dausa, were also threatened.

Officials said the threatening messages were sent via email. Similar emails were reportedly received by government offices in the state capital Jaipur, as well as in Alwar, Sawai Madhopur, and Hanumangarh.

After the threatening emails were reported, senior officials were immediately informed and local police stations were placed on alert.

Police and security teams quickly reached the locations, evacuated the buildings as a precaution, and carried out thorough searches.

OBJECTIONABLE REMARKS

LPC recommends 30-day civil imprisonment for NCP Leader

MUMBAI

The Privilege Committee of the Legislative Council on Tuesday submitted its report on NCP(SP) leader Suryakant More, recommending 30 days of civil imprisonment for his objectionable remarks against Maharashtra Legislative Council Chairman Ram Shinde during the poll campaign rally in the recently-concluded local body polls.

Committee Chairman and BJP MLC Prasad Lad presented the report in this re-

gards.

Shinde who was in the Chair announced that the report has been submitted to the council.

The Legislative Council in the Winter Session of the State Legislature had accepted a breach of Privilege Motion moved by BJP MLC Pravin Darekar against Suryakant More of the NCP(SP).

The motion was filed following More's 'highly objectionable' remarks concerning the Legislative Council chairperson and the state legislature. More is a close associate of NCP(SP)'s local MLA Rohit Pawar.

Deputy Chairperson Neelam Gorhe had then accepted the motion and directed authorities to conduct an enquiry against More and register a criminal case against him.

The incident stems from an election rally for the Jamkhed Municipal Council, where More allegedly targeted the Legislative Council and its chairperson, Ram Shinde.

The tension was rooted in local political rivalries: Ram Shinde had previously been defeated in the Karjat-Jamkhed Assembly seat by Rohit Pawar (NCP-SP), and the exchange was part of an ongoing political feud in that constituency.

Presenting the notice, BJP group leader Praveen Darekar cited More's controversial statements from the November 23, 2025, rally in Jamkhed: Nobody cares about the red-coloured badge… The Legislative Council chairman does not even have the powers of a Panchayat Samiti chairman. The Speaker's job is limited to counting votes… The Legislative Council's red colour is a symbol of drought.

QUICK READ

258 rape cases reported in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa last year

Islamabad

The Human Rights Council of Pakistan has revealed that as many as 258 rape cases were reported in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in 2025. However, only one conviction was recorded, the local media reported. HRCP revealed the fresh statistics in a 2025 human rights report launched at the Peshawar Press Club. During the launch of the report, the council's provincial president Izharuddin Khan said that around five per cent of women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa faced violence regularly. He stated that about 30% of gender-based violence cases were reported while nearly 70% remained unreported in Pakhtunkhwa.

Spring Fest: China's consumer inflation rises over 1% in Feb

Beijing

The consumer price index (CPI) of China a main gauge of inflation increased 1.3 percent YoY last month, driven by the effects of the Spring Festival holiday, official data showed. The core CPI, which excludes food and energy prices, increased 1.8 percent year on year, according to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). Data also revealed that the producer price index (PPI), which measures costs for goods at the factory gate, went down 0.9 percent year on year last month, with the decline narrowing continuously, the NBS noted.

Reset in India-B'desh ties brings sharp focus on border security

Dhaka

The elections that were held recently in Bangladesh have not just been a turning point for the country, but have also ensured the much-needed resetting of ties with India. This reset in New Delhi-Dhaka ties brings into sharp focus key issues like border security among other things. However, Indian officials are hopeful that ties henceforth will only improve. Under Prime Minister Tarique Rahman it is diplomacy as usual and this has come as a breather not just for New Delhi, but Dhaka as well. Bangladesh watchers say that the Narendra Modi government was no doubt under pressure regarding relations with Bangladesh.

Block global oil supply, US will hit 'harder than ever': Trump to Iran

Tensions between Iran-US escalated after Revolutionary Guards warned they would block all oil exports from Middle East if US and Israel strikes Iran.

TEHRAN

The statement from Iran's Revolutionary Guards marked a significant escalation in the ongoing conflict, raising fears of a major disruption to global oil supplies. The Middle East is responsible for a substantial share of the world's crude oil exports, and any blockade could trigger a severe global energy crisis.

President Trump responded swiftly to Iran's warning, issuing a strong message that the United States would not tolerate attempts to block international shipping routes or interfere with oil exports. He warned that any such action by Tehran would be met with overwhelming force.

Despite the sharp rhetoric from both sides, financial markets on Tuesday suggested that investors believe the conflict may end sooner rather than later. Many market participants placed strong bets that Trump would call off the military campaign before the war causes irreversible damage to global energy supplies and the world economy.

Oil markets reflected this cautious optimism. After a historic surge in crude oil prices on Monday following reports of intensified fighting, prices fell sharply the next day as traders anticipated a possible de-escalation. Global stock markets also showed signs of recovery, with Asian and European share prices rebounding after suffering steep losses earlier.

However, on the ground in Iran, the situation remains grim. Residents of Tehran reported some of the heaviest bombardment of the conflict overnight as U.S. and Israeli forces continued their strikes on the capital.

One resident, speaking to Reuters on the condition of anonymity due to security concerns, described the attacks as relentless and terrifying. It was like hell. They were bombing everywhere, every part of Tehran, the resident said over the phone.

The resident added that families are living in constant fear, with children too frightened to sleep as explosions echo across the city. My children are afraid to sleep now. We have nowhere to go, the person said.

With tensions continuing to rise and no immediate ceasefire in sight, the conflict is increasingly threatening to destabilize global energy markets and deepen geopolitical uncertainty.

Trump-Putin discuss Ukraine peace amid energy concerns

WASHINGTON

According to the Kremlin, the conversation reportedly the first phone call between the two leaders this year focused on several key geopolitical issues, including the escalating war involving Iran, the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, and the broader impact of global energy disruptions.

The war in Iran has already caused sharp volatility in global energy markets. Oil prices recently recorded their biggest spike since Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, driven by fears that the conflict could disrupt oil shipments from the Middle East.

However, much of the surge in crude oil prices seen earlier in the week was reversed on Tuesday as markets stabilized. Asian and European stock markets also recovered after experiencing significant declines, suggesting that investors are cautiously optimistic about a possible easing of tensions.

During the call, the Kremlin said the two leaders discussed Russian proposals aimed at bringing a quick end to the Iran conflict. They also exchanged views on the current military situation in Ukraine and the broader implications of global oil supply disruptions, including developments in Venezuela that could influence energy markets.

Speaking later at a press conference at his golf club in Florida, Trump described the conversation as positive. I had a very good call with President Putin, he said, adding that the Russian leader expressed interest in helping resolve the crisis involving Iran.

Trump also emphasized that resolving the Russia-Ukraine war would be a more significant contribution to global stability. He said he told Putin that ending the conflict in Ukraine would be more helpful for the international community.

Earlier in the day, Putin warned that the ongoing U.S.–Israeli war with Iran had already sparked a global energy crisis. He cautioned that oil production dependent on transport routes near Iran, particularly through the Strait of Hormuz, could soon halt entirely if the conflict escalates further.

The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most critical maritime chokepoints, handling roughly one-fifth of global oil shipments. Any disruption to traffic through the strait could severely impact energy markets and increase the risk of economic instability worldwide.

With conflicts continuing in both the Middle East and Eastern Europe, analysts warn that geopolitical tensions could further strain global energy supplies and financial markets in the coming weeks.

Investigators search Epstein's former New Mexico ranch

STANLEY

Investigators in New Mexico have begun searching the former ranch of late financier Jeffrey Epstein following new allegations tied to sexual abuse and other potential crimes at the secluded property.

The search operation began at Epstein's remote high-plains ranch located about 30 miles (48 kilometers) south of Santa Fe, the capital of New Mexico. The property, often referred to as the Zorro Ranch, has long been linked to allegations that Epstein and several of his associates abused women and underage girls there.

The renewed investigation comes after the U.S. Department of Justice released documents in January that contained new information related to Epstein's activities.

Among the allegations cited in those documents is a claim that Epstein ordered the bodies of two foreign girls to be buried in hills near the secluded ranch property. Authorities have not yet confirmed the credibility of the accusation but say it is serious enough to warrant a thorough search of the area.

The move follows New Mexico Attorney General Raul Torrez's decision last month to reopen the investigation into Epstein's alleged criminal activities at the ranch. Officials say the goal is to determine whether additional evidence can be uncovered that may shed light on crimes believed to have occurred there.

In a statement, the New Mexico Department of Justice said the investigation will be carried out carefully while ensuring that survivors of abuse remain supported throughout the process. The New Mexico Department of Justice will continue to keep the public appropriately informed, support the survivors, and follow the facts wherever they lead, the statement said.

Activity at the ranch on Monday indicated that investigators were conducting a detailed search operation. A Reuters witness reported hearing dogs barking and seeing a government vehicle marked with a paw-print symbol leaving the property, suggesting that trained search dogs were involved in the investigation.

Additionally, state police vehicles and a county fire and rescue unit were seen near the ranch, highlighting the scale of the operation. Authorities have not yet disclosed what investigators are specifically searching for or whether any evidence has been recovered.

Jeffrey Epstein, who was arrested in 2019 on federal sex trafficking charges involving underage girls, died in jail later that year while awaiting trial. His death was officially ruled a suicide, but investigations into his network and alleged crimes have continued in several jurisdictions.

'Over 1,200 killed in Haiti drone strikes'

HAITI

Human Rights Watch reported that since March last year, Haitian security forces have conducted anti-gang operations using quadcopter drones equipped with explosives.

The operations have largely taken place in and around Port-au-Prince, where powerful criminal gangs control significant portions of the city.

Strikes have killed over 1,200 people. Among the dead are 43 adult and 17 children. HRW said the operations have intensified in recent months as authorities attempt to regain control from heavily armed gangs.

Weapons plot: Cyprus detains suspected Hamas member wanted by Germany

BERLIN

According to German prosecutors, the suspect identified as Kamel M., in accordance with German privacy laws was detained at Larnaca International Airport in Cyprus on March 6 after arriving on a flight from Lebanon.

The Lebanese-born individual is accused of involvement in acquiring ammunition intended for use in attacks targeting Israeli or Jewish facilities in Germany and elsewhere in Europe.

Investigators said the suspect is linked to the transportation of approximately 300 rounds of live ammunition. Authorities did not disclose where the ammunition originated or where it was intended to be delivered, but prosecutors stated that the operation was part of preparations for potentially deadly attacks.

The operation served as preparation for deadly Hamas attacks on Israeli or Jewish institutions in Germany and Europe, German federal prosecutors said in an official statement.

Following the arrest, German police also carried out a search of the suspect's apartment in Berlin as part of the ongoing investigation.

Memories of 2021 stir linger as Cuba faces deepening economic crisis

CUBA

The protests began unexpectedly in the quiet Cuban town of San Antonio de los Baños, where residents took to the streets one morning to express frustration over worsening living conditions. What started as a local demonstration quickly spread across the country, sparking a wave of protests that challenged the Cuban government in a way not seen for decades.

The demonstrators voiced anger over chronic shortages of food and medicine, along with prolonged electricity outages that had intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. As economic hardships mounted, crowds marched through the streets chanting Patria y Vida, meaning Homeland and Life. The phrase comes from a popular song that reverses the long-standing Communist slogan Patria o Muerte, or Homeland or Death.

Patria y Vida soon became the rallying cry of a movement calling for greater freedoms and improved living conditions. However, the protests were swiftly suppressed by Cuban state security forces, leading to arrests and harsh measures against those involved.

Today, Cuba faces an even more severe crisis. The country has been grappling with an oil blockade and economic sanctions imposed by the United States, which have compounded existing shortages and deepened economic hardship for many citizens.

During a recent visit to San Antonio de los Baños and the Havana neighborhood of La Güinera two of the areas where clashes between police and protesters were most intense journalists found that memories of the crackdown remain vivid.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

4			9			2		
	2	3		8	1		6	4
9			2			3		
	6	1		2	8		9	5
2			5			6		
3		9		4	7		1	2
	9		1			7		
6		5		7	3		2	9
1			4			5		

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

3	7	5	1	2	9	8	6	4
4	8	6	7	5	3	9	2	1
1	2	9	4	8	6	7	3	5
5	9	4	3	6	2	1	7	8
2	1	8	9	7	5	3	4	6
6	3	7	8	1	4	2	5	9
9	4	2	5	3	8	6	1	7
8	6	1	2	4	7	5	9	3
7	5	3	6	9	1	4	8	2

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

TRUMP CRACKDOWN

US sees record Islamophobia complaints in 2025

WASHINGTON

CAIR said it recorded 8,683 complaints of anti-Muslim and anti-Arab discrimination across the United States in 2025, the highest number since the organization began compiling such data in 1996. The figure slightly surpassed the 8,658 complaints reported in 2024, continuing a multi-year trend of rising Islamophobia in the country.

The report found that the most common complaints involved employment discrimination, which accounted for 12.7% of the cases. Other major categories included immigration and asylum-related complaints at 6.5%, hate incidents at 6.4%, and travel discrimination such as government watchlists and security screenings at 5.6%.

Advocates have long linked waves of Islamophobia in the United States to major political and global events. Earlier spikes followed the September 11, 2001 attacks, while more recent incidents have been associated with anti-immigration sentiment, the rise of white supremacist rhetoric, and tensions related to Israel's war in Gaza.

CAIR said policies introduced under Trump contributed to the surge in complaints. These included intensified immigration enforcement, stricter vetting of immigrants' online activity, and attempts to deport foreign nationals involved in pro-Palestinian demonstrations. Critics argue that these measures have raised concerns about free speech, due process, and civil liberties.

The Trump administration has denied accusations of discrimination, stating that its policies are designed to curb illegal immigration and strengthen national security. However, civil rights advocates say the measures unfairly target Muslim and immigrant communities.

CAIR also highlighted remarks made by Trump about Somali Americans in Minnesota, a community with a large Muslim population. The group said such statements contributed to collective targeting of the community. Complaints reported by CAIR's Minnesota chapter nearly doubled in 2025, rising to 693 from 353 the previous year.

The report also examined government actions against pro-Palestinian activism on U.S. campuses. According to CAIR, authorities attempted to deport foreign protesters and threatened funding cuts for universities where demonstrations took place.

Advocates warn that such measures risk conflating criticism of Israel's policies with antisemitism and could undermine civil liberties. As debates over immigration, security, and Middle East politics continue, rights groups say the findings highlight the growing challenges facing Muslim and Arab communities in the United States.

FIFA Confident 2026 WC Will Proceed Despite Middle East Conflict

Global football body says tournament will continue as scheduled despite geopolitical tensions

DALLAS

The FIFA World Cup scheduled for 2026 will proceed as planned despite escalating tensions in the Middle East, with the global football governing body insisting that the scale and significance of the tournament make postponement highly unlikely.

FIFA Chief Operating Officer Heimo Schirgi said the tournament is "too big" to be delayed because of geopolitical turmoil linked to the ongoing Iran–Israel–United States conflict.

"At some stage we will have a resolution, and the World Cup will go on, obviously," Schirgi said while addressing concerns over the potential impact of the conflict on participating teams and logistics.

The comments came amid growing uncertainty over the participation of Iran national football team, which has already qualified for the tournament through the Asian Football Confederation qualification pathway. Iran's involvement has been questioned due to the ongoing military conflict affecting the country.

Schirgi said FIFA remains hopeful that all qualified teams will be able to participate in the tournament. "The World Cup is too big, and we hope that everyone who has qualified will be able to take part," he added.

According to FIFA officials, the organisation is closely monitoring developments in the Middle East while coordinating with government authorities and international partners to evaluate the situation on a daily basis.

The football body has also maintained communication with the Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran, although Schirgi declined to reveal details of those discussions. The FIFA World Cup 2026 will be the largest edition in the tournament's history, featuring 48 teams and matches staged across three host nations — the United States, Mexico and Canada.

Iran has been placed in Group G and is scheduled to face Belgium national football team, New Zealand national football team and Egypt national football team during the group stage. Two of Iran's matches are expected to be played in Los Angeles, while another is scheduled in Seattle.

FIFA officials were in Dallas to review preparations for the city's 34-day fan festival and inspect construction of the World Cup's broadcast hub at the downtown convention centre, underscoring ongoing preparations for what is expected to be the biggest football tournament ever staged.

Arsenal Favourites Against Bayer Leverkusen in Champions League Last-16 Clash

LONDON

Arsenal F.C. head into their UEFA Champions League last-16 clash against Bayer Leverkusen as strong favourites as the Premier League leaders aim to continue their impressive run in Europe.

Managed by Mikel Arteta, Arsenal have been in exceptional form this season and remain in contention for four trophies. The London club, still chasing its first major silverware since 2020, cruised into the knockout stage after winning all eight matches in the league phase of the UEFA Champions League.

Premier League leaders eye quarterfinal berth as European giants collide across continent

Victory over Leverkusen would send Arsenal into a quarterfinal tie against either Bodø/Glimt or Sporting CP. Defender William Saliba, who has missed the club's last two matches due to an ankle injury, could return for the crucial encounter.

Leverkusen, currently sixth in the Bundesliga, are rebuilding after a turbulent summer that saw the departure of coach Xabi Alonso and several key players including Florian Wirtz and Granit Xhaka. Spanish fullback Alejandro Grimaldo, however, remains confident of his side's chances, especially playing at home.

Elsewhere, defending champions Paris Saint Germain face Chelsea F.C. in a high-profile showdown — their first meeting since Chelsea's 3-0 victory in last year's FIFA Club World Cup final. PSG coach Luis Enrique will hope star winger Ousmane Dembele returns to full fitness for the tie.

Another blockbuster clash sees Real Madrid host Manchester City in a rivalry that has defined recent Champions League seasons. Madrid, the record 15-time European champions, could be without injured stars Kylian Mbappe and Jude Bellingham for the first leg, placing greater responsibility on Vinicius Junior in attack.

City manager Pep Guardiola is also sweating over the fitness of striker Erling Haaland, who missed the club's FA Cup win against Newcastle United due to an ankle injury. Meanwhile, Norwegian side Bodø/Glimt continue their remarkable European journey as they host Sporting in the Arctic city of Bodø, hoping to extend one of the tournament's most surprising campaigns.

Michael Vaughan Slams ICC as West Indies, South Africa Remain Stranded in India

LONDON

Former England captain Michael Vaughan has strongly criticised the International Cricket Council (ICC) after the West Indies cricket team and South Africa national cricket team remained stranded in India for several days following their elimination from the ICC Men's T20 World Cup.

The delay in travel has been caused by international airspace restrictions linked to the escalating West Asia conflict involving the United States, Israel and Iran, which has disrupted several flight routes across the region.

Vaughan took to social media platform X to question what he described as unequal treatment between teams. He pointed out that the England cricket team managed to depart India within 36 hours of their exit from the tournament, while West Indies and South Africa were still waiting days later to return home.

"Just to let you all know that the West Indies got knocked out of the World Cup on March 1. It's now March 9 and they are still stranded in Kolkata. South Africa are in the same position. This isn't right. England got on a charter 36 hours after being knocked out, as should be the case for all teams," Vaughan wrote in a strongly worded post.

The West Indies team had been eliminated from the tournament after a defeat to India national cricket team in the Super 8 stage on March 1, while South Africa exited following a semi-final loss to New Zealand national cricket team on March 4.

Both squads have remained in Kolkata due to limited flight availability amid ongoing airspace restrictions.

Officials confirmed that a shared charter flight has now been arranged to transport the teams to Johannesburg. From there, the West Indies players are expected to continue onward to Antigua.

Jaipur Polo Team Wins SMS Gold Vase, Clinches Ninth Title This Season

JAIPUR

Padmanabh Singh leads Jaipur to thrilling victory in closely contested polo final.

The Jaipur Polo Team continued its dominant run this season by winning the prestigious SMS Gold Vase after defeating Krishna Polo Team 6–5.5 in a closely fought final, securing its ninth title of the campaign.

Led by Padmanabh Singh, popularly known as Pacho, Jaipur produced a composed performance in the final stages to edge past a determined Krishna Polo side. The contest witnessed several momentum shifts across the chukkers, keeping spectators engaged throughout the match.

Jaipur started strongly and built early attacking pressure to take a 2–1.5 lead at the end of the first chukker. However, Krishna Polo bounced back in the second chukker, with Vishal Singh Rathore spearheading the charge to give his side a narrow 3.5–3 lead at halftime.

The turning point came in the third chukker as Jaipur tightened its control of possession and capitalised on scoring opportunities. Padmanabh Singh led the attack with sharp finishing, helping Jaipur regain the advantage and move ahead 5–3.5 heading into the final phase of the match. Krishna Polo attempted a late comeback in the fourth chukker through goals from Rathore and Sidhant Singh. Despite the pressure, Jaipur maintained defensive discipline and managed the closing moments effectively to secure the narrow victory and lift the coveted trophy.

Earlier, Jaipur had reached the final after defeating RPC Polo Team in an exciting semi-final. RPC had taken an early 3.5–1 lead in the opening chukker, but Jaipur gradually fought back. Goals from Harshodya Singh and Yogendra Singh helped reduce the deficit to 4.5–4 by halftime.

In the third chukker, Jaipur seized momentum as Divyamaan Singh Dujod and Padmanabh Singh struck crucial goals to give the team a slender lead. Jaipur extended the advantage in the final chukker and sealed an 8–5.5 win to progress to the championship clash.

With this victory, the Jaipur Polo Team has further strengthened its reputation as one of the most dominant sides in the current polo season, continuing a remarkable run of consistent performances and titles.

Alcaraz Fights Back to Reach Fourth Round at Indian Wells

INDIAN WELLS

World number one Carlos Alcaraz battled back from a set down to defeat Arthur Rinderknech 6-7(6/8), 6-3, 6-2 and advance to the fourth round of the BNP Paribas Open.

The 22-year-old Spaniard had to dig deep against the powerful-serving Frenchman in a gripping encounter at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden. Rinderknech showed impressive resilience early in the match, saving a set point before edging the opening set in a tense tie-break.

The Frenchman continued his strong run by breaking Alcaraz's serve in the opening game of the second set, briefly putting the top seed under pressure. However, Alcaraz quickly responded with an immediate break back and began to raise his intensity from the baseline.

With his trademark speed and aggressive shot-making, the Spaniard steadily shifted the momentum. He secured a crucial break in the sixth game of the second set and comfortably held serve to level the match. The turning point came early in the deciding set when Alcaraz broke Rinderknech again in the opening game.

Carlos Alcaraz rallied from a set down to beat Arthur Rinderknech and reach the Indian Wells fourth round after battle.

From there, the world number one maintained control, dictating rallies and forcing errors from the Frenchman.

Another break later in the set sealed the victory and extended Alcaraz's perfect record against Rinderknech to six wins from six meetings. The victory also kept Alcaraz unbeaten in the 2026 season. The Spaniard has been in sensational form this year, having already claimed the Australian Open title earlier in the season — becoming the youngest male player to complete a career Grand Slam.

He followed that triumph by winning the Qatar Open, and his latest win improved his season record to an impressive 14-0.

Alcaraz is also a two-time champion at Indian Wells and is widely considered one of the favourites to lift the trophy again this year.

In the fourth round, Alcaraz will face 13th-seeded Norwegian Casper Ruud, who rallied to defeat Valentin Vacherot 3-6, 6-3, 6-4.

With his confidence high and form intact, Alcaraz continues to look like the player to beat at one of tennis's most prestigious Masters events.

SINIAKOVA UPSETS ANDREEVA, ENDS INDIAN WELLS TITLE DEFENCE IN THIRD ROUND

INDIAN WELLS

Unseeded Katerina Siniakova produced a stunning comeback to knock defending champion Mirra Andreeva out of the BNP Paribas Open with a hard-fought 4-6, 7-6(5), 6-3 victory in the third round.

The 18-year-old Russian, ranked eighth in the world, had entered the match with strong momentum after opening her title defence with a dominant 6-0, 6-0 victory over Solana Sierra. However, Siniakova, currently ranked 44th, proved a difficult opponent in windy conditions at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden. Andreeva initially appeared in control after claiming the first set 6-4, but the contest quickly turned into a rollercoaster. The second set saw both players struggle to hold serve, with multiple break points and tense exchanges that eventually led to a tie-break. Siniakova held her nerve to clinch it 7-5 and force a deciding set. Emotions ran high during the match as Andreeva expressed frustration after losing the second set, while both players engaged in discussions with the chair umpire regarding certain points during the encounter.

In the final set, Andreeva briefly regained the advantage with a break to lead 3-2. However, Siniakova responded brilliantly, winning the next four games to seize control. She saved two break points in the final game before sealing victory on her first match point — aided by a fortunate net-cord shot that dribbled over to end the contest. After the match, Siniakova admitted the dramatic finish felt unusual. "Of course I'm happy it went on the other side," she said, referring to the net cord that ended the match. "It was a tricky finish, but I'm definitely happy with the win."

The Czech player will next face Elina Svitolina in the fourth round after the ninth-seeded Ukrainian defeated American Ashlyn Krueger 6-4, 6-2.

Elsewhere, world number two Iga Swiatek advanced comfortably with a 6-3, 6-2 win over Maria Sakkari. Swiatek will face Karolina Muchova next, while American fifth seed Jessica Pegula rallied to defeat Jelena Ostapenko 4-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Gujarat Titans Appoint Matthew Hayden as Batting Coach Ahead of IPL 2026

AHMEDABAD

Gujarat Titans have appointed former Australian opener Matthew Hayden as their batting coach ahead of the upcoming season of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026.

The franchise announced the development on Tuesday, adding that Hayden's vast experience and deep understanding of modern T20 batting will play a crucial role in strengthening the team's batting unit for the new season.

A two-time ODI World Cup winner with Australia national cricket team, Hayden enjoyed a remarkable international career spanning more than a decade. He represented Australia in 273 international matches across formats and scored over 15,000 runs, establishing himself as one of the most destructive opening batters of his generation.

Known for his powerful stroke play and aggressive approach at the top of the order, Hayden was instrumental in Australia's dominance in world cricket during the early 2000s. His style of batting helped shape the modern concept of attacking play during the powerplay overs in limited-overs cricket.

Confirming the appointment, Gujarat Titans' Director of Cricket Vikram Solanki said Hayden's presence would be invaluable for the franchise as it looks to further develop its batting depth and guide younger players.

"Matthew's appointment comes at a pivotal phase in our journey. His experience at the highest level, coupled with his ability to mentor emerging talent, will be instrumental in shaping our batting identity for the seasons ahead," Solanki said in a statement.

Hayden also expressed excitement about joining the Titans set-up and contributing to the team's ambitions in the tournament. "Good batting applies pressure. Great batting owns the game. That's the standard we want to set at Gujarat Titans," Hayden said, emphasising the aggressive mindset he hopes to bring to the squad. The former opener also has experience in the IPL, having played 32 matches in the tournament during his career. His attacking style and technical strength made him well-suited to the high-intensity nature of the league.

QUICK READ

Govt approves ₹ 3,630.77 crore for greenfield connectivity

New Delhi

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on Tuesday approved the revised total capital cost of Rs 3,630.77 crore for the construction of greenfield connectivity to the Jewar International Airport from Delhi-Faridabad-Ballabhgarh-Sohna spur of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway on hybrid annuity mode in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. This 31.42 km-long-project corridor will provide direct and high-speed connectivity from south Delhi, Faridabad, and Gurugram to Jewar International Airport, thereby promoting economic growth and logistics efficiency across the National Capital Region (NCR). The corridor intersects the Eastern Peripheral Expressway, the Yamuna Expressway, and the Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC), enabling multimodal transport convergence.

West Asia conflict may hit trade, energy: Assocham

New Delhi

Assocham on Tuesday cautioned that a prolonged regional conflict in West Asia, amid escalating tensions involving the United States, Israel and Iran, could disrupt global trade and affect India's energy supplies and exports. The apex industry chamber said India's economy is closely linked to West Asian supply chains while also relying heavily on the Gulf region as a key export destination. The Middle East remains a major supplier of crude oil, liquefied natural gas (LNG), petrochemicals, fertilisers and aluminium.

Bangladesh inflation touches 10-month high in Feb as food prices surge

Dhaka

Overall inflation in Bangladesh rose to 9.13 per cent in February from 8.58 per cent in January, touching the highest level in 10 months, a report has said. The surge in inflation was driven by rising food prices ahead of Ramadan and election related spending, the report from Daily Star said. The Consumer Price Index rose above 9 per cent for the first time since May last year, marking the fourth consecutive monthly surge, since inflation touched a 39 month low of 8.17 per cent in October, according to data released by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. Food inflation jumped to 9.30 per cent in February from 8.29 per cent in January, while non food inflation edged up to 9.01 per cent from 8.81 per cent, indicating pressure in housing, transport and healthcare, the report said.

CCEA clears ₹4,474 cr rail projects in Jharkhand, WB

In a major push to strengthen railway infrastructure and improve connectivity, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by PM Modi

KOLKATA

The two approved railway projects include the Sainthia–Pakur 4th line and the Santragachi–Kharagpur 4th line.

Together, these projects will expand the existing Indian Railways network by about 192 kilometres and will cover five districts across West Bengal and Jharkhand. According to official sources, the projects are expected to be completed by 2030–31.

Once completed, the enhanced rail infrastructure will provide improved connectivity to nearly 5,652 villages in the region, benefiting an estimated population of around 1.47 crore people. The expansion is expected to significantly boost passenger mobility and ensure smoother railway operations by increasing line capacity and reducing congestion on busy routes.

The new rail lines will also improve access to several prominent tourist and cultural destinations. Key locations likely to benefit include Bolpur Shantiniketan, Nandikeshwari Temple, Tarapith Temple, Bhimbandh Wildlife Sanctuary, as well as heritage and nature sites such as Patachitra Gram, Dhadika Forest, and Rameshwar Kund.

Officials stated that the enhanced line capacity will help improve service reliability and operational efficiency across the railway network. By enabling smoother train movement and reducing delays, the projects are expected to streamline railway operations and support faster transportation of passengers and goods.

The railway routes are also strategically important for the movement of key commodities such as coal, stone, dolomite, cement, slag, gypsum, iron and steel, foodgrains, petroleum products, and containers. Improved freight capacity will help reduce logistics costs and strengthen supply chains across the region.

The government noted that the projects align with Prime Minister Modi's vision of building a New India by promoting comprehensive regional development and encouraging employment and self-employment opportunities.

Planned under the PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan, the projects focus on integrated infrastructure planning to enhance multi-modal connectivity and logistics efficiency. Officials said the initiative will also contribute to India's climate goals by encouraging more efficient and sustainable rail transport.

India's road infrastructure has witnessed remarkable growth over the past decade, with the national highway network expanding rapidly to become the world's second-largest

India's NH network expands to 1.46L km, becomes world's second largest

NEW DELHI

The government has constructed 57,125 km of National Highways over the past five years, achieving an average construction pace of about 34,215 lane-km annually.

Officials said this expansion has significantly boosted employment, generating an estimated 33 crore person-days of work each year through both direct and indirect opportunities linked to road construction and related sectors.

The rapid development has been driven largely by flagship initiatives such as the Bharatmala Pariyojana, which focuses on improving freight corridors, border connectivity, coastal roads, and economic corridors across the country. As a result of these initiatives, the National Highway network has expanded by around 61 per cent, growing from 91,287 km in 2014 to 1,46,560 km in 2025.

Significant progress has also been made in the development of high-speed corridors and expressways. The total length of operational access-controlled High-Speed Corridors and Expressways has increased dramatically from just 93 km in 2014 to 3,052 km by the end of this year. These modern roadways are designed to enable faster travel, reduce logistics costs, and improve the efficiency of long-distance transportation.

In addition, the length of four-lane and above National Highways, including access-controlled corridors, has more than doubled over the last decade. The network expanded from 18,371 km in 2014 to 43,512 km at present, improving road capacity and helping reduce congestion on major routes.

Government investment in highway infrastructure has also grown substantially during this period. Budgetary allocation for National Highways has increased by more than 500 per cent, rising from approximately ₹31,130 crore in 2013–14 to over ₹2.7 lakh crore in 2023–24.

India-EFTA trade deal hits 2-yr mark, unlocks $100 bn investment

NEW DELHI

The Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) between India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) has completed two years since its signing, with the government on Tuesday highlighted that the pact is strengthening cooperation in trade, investment, services and technology. The agreement, which came into effect on October 1, 2025, is expected to deepen India's economic ties with the EFTA member countries Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland -- while supporting industrial growth and export expansion, Ministry of Commerce & Industry said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India has steadily built a strong network of trade partnerships in recent years. The fact that India now has FTAs with 38 countries reflects a major shift in the country's trade strategy, PM Modi stated. These agreements connect India with economies across continents and offer Indian producers the opportunity to access diverse global markets, Prime Minister Modi mentioned.

The Prime Minister also noted that India's service sector has already established the country as a hub for Global Capability Centres. With clearer regulations and better mobility provisions under trade agreements, Indian professionals are expected to gain more opportunities abroad. India's manufacturing sector has made significant progress in recent years and the FTAs will help integrate Indian products more deeply into global supply chains, PM Modi explained.

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said the India-EFTA TEPA is designed with long-term economic goals in mind. The agreement will provide Indian exporters better access to high-income markets in Europe and also open an investment pathway worth $100 billion over the next 15 years, Goyal noted. According to him, the pact will also help Indian industries access advanced machinery, quality inputs and technology partnerships needed to strengthen manufacturing.

India's deal volume rises 34% in Feb, records 278 transactions worth $5.4 bn

NEW DELHI

India's deal activity remained resilient in February, recording 278 transactions worth $5.4 billion -- up 34 per cent sequentially in terms of volumes, a report said on Tuesday.

The report from Grant Thornton Bharat said the surge was led by private equity and venture capital participation, which recorded 169 deals worth $2.8 billion, the highest monthly deal count in four years.

While overall deal values saw only a modest recovery, the surge in volumes signals renewed investor conviction and broader capital deployment across sectors, the report said.

Mergers and acquisitions regained traction with 104 deals totalling $2 billion. Domestic M&A dominated, with strategic and scale-driven consolidation as a defined theme across core sectors, said Shanthi Vijetha, Partner, Growth, Grant Thornton Bharat.

Domestic consolidation dominated, accounting for 69 per cent of volumes and 78 per cent of total M&A value.

Escalating geopolitical tensions in the Middle East alongside a weakening rupee, introduce incremental risks to capital flows and cross-border sentiment.

Despite these uncertainties, strong domestic liquidity, resilient corporate balance sheets, and growing global investor preference for India will likely support continued deal activity in 2026, Vijetha said.

PE/VC activity anchored deal momentum, with significant rise in volumes but average deal size fell to $16.6 million from $21.6 million in January, indicating a shift toward smaller-ticket investments.

IPO and QIP activity showed moderation with three IPOs raising $436 million, and two QIPs mobilising $139 million, reflecting selective capital formation amid cautious sentiment.

Energy and Natural Resources led performance, with volumes rising 217% and values tripling month-on-month.

India boosts LPG production by 10% to ensure stable cooking gas supply

NEW DELHI

In a move aimed at ensuring adequate availability of cooking gas for households, the Centre has directed oil refineries across the country to increase the production of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) by around 10 per cent

According to government officials, India's oil refineries have ramped up LPG production following directions issued by the central government.

The increase in production is intended to ensure that households continue to receive uninterrupted cooking gas supplies, particularly amid rising demand across the country.

To further regulate distribution and prevent misuse of domestic LPG cylinders, the government has also revised the waiting period for new cylinder bookings. The interval between bookings has been increased from 21 days to 25 days. Officials said the decision was taken to curb malpractices and discourage the diversion of subsidised domestic LPG cylinders for commercial use.

Government sources stated that authorities are closely monitoring the supply situation under the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act. The Act allows the government to regulate the production, supply, and distribution of essential commodities to ensure fair availability and prevent hoarding or black marketing.

At the same time, officials clarified that the Essential Services Maintenance Act has not been invoked. The Act, commonly known as ESMA, is typically used to ensure the continued delivery of critical services during disruptions such as strikes or emergencies.

Officials maintained that India is currently in a relatively strong position compared to many other countries in terms of energy availability. According to sources, the government has been actively engaging with multiple countries to ensure that India's energy requirements continue to be met without interruption.

Authorities acknowledged that concerns had been raised earlier regarding potential supply constraints. However, they emphasised that the situation has now stabilised and that LPG supply chains across the country are functioning normally.

The government continues to monitor the situation closely to ensure that domestic consumers receive a steady and reliable supply of cooking gas while maintaining strict oversight to prevent irregularities in distribution.

BANKNOTES IN CIRCULATION

No shortage of ₹10, ₹20 & ₹50 notes in India: Minister

NEW DELHI

There is no shortage of lower-denomination currency notes of Rs 10, Rs 20 and Rs 50 in circulation in the country, the government told the Parliament on Tuesday.

Minister of State for Finance, Pankaj Chaudhary, in a reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, said that as per the RBI, lower-denomination banknotes have not been traditionally dispensed through ATMs.

A pilot project for dispensing lower denomination banknotes through small value dispensers has been launched, he informed the house.

According to the government, in the current financial year (up to February 26), 439.40 crore pieces of Rs 10 denomination notes, 193.70 crore pieces of Rs 20, and 130.30 crore pieces of Rs 50 bank notes have been supplied by the central bank.

In the last fiscal (FY25), 180 crore pieces of Rs 10 banknotes, 150 crore pieces of Rs 20, and 300 crore pieces of Rs 50 were supplied.

The RBI, as part of a continuous process, assesses the requirement of different denominations of banknotes and makes recommendations to the government on the required denomination mix to be printed. The demand for lower denominations of currency is met through a mix of banknotes and coins. Besides, the digital modes of payment constitute a significant portion of the overall transactions, including low-value transactions.

The RBI has informed that it endeavours to put adequate quantities of banknotes and coins of different denominations in circulation on a continuous basis to meet the demand of the economy, said the minister.

Replying to another question, the minister said that, as reported by the National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI), the total number of digital transactions reported through RuPay KCC cards in FY 2025-26 (up to December 31, 2025) is 3.72 lakh with a value of Rs 111.17 crore.

The credit limit to all eligible farmers under KCC is determined according to the scale of finance of the crops, area under cultivation, cropping pattern, and related requirements.

BCCI Announces ₹131 Cr Reward for India's T20 WC-Winning Team

NEW DELHI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Tuesday announced a cash reward of ₹131 crore for the Indian squad following its historic triumph in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, celebrating the team's third title in the tournament's history.

The reward will be distributed among the 15-member squad, coaching staff and other members of the support personnel who contributed to India's successful campaign. According to sources, the players are expected to receive the lion's share of the prize money, while the allocation for support staff will be determined according to hierarchy and role within the team setup.

In an official statement, BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia congratulated the players, coaching staff and selectors for their outstanding achievement. "The Board congratulates the players, support staff and selectors once again on this historic achievement and wishes them continued success in the future," Saikia said.

Board honours players and staff after historic third ICC T20 World Cup triumph

The ₹131 crore reward marks an increase from the ₹125 crore announced for the team led by Rohit Sharma after India's T20 World Cup victory in 2024. The latest title, however, carries special significance as it establishes India as the most successful side in the history of the competition.

India secured the championship after defeating New Zealand national cricket team by a massive 96-run margin in the final at the Narendra Modi Stadium on Sunday. Led by captain Suryakumar Yadav, the team produced a dominant performance in the title clash to successfully defend its crown.

With the victory, India also became the first team to win the ICC Men's T20 World Cup three times, reinforcing its reputation as a powerhouse in white-ball cricket. The win further highlighted the depth of talent within the Indian squad and the consistency the team has shown in the shortest format of the game.

The emphatic triumph and the substantial cash reward underline the BCCI's recognition of the players' efforts and the significance of the achievement for Indian cricket, as fans across the country continue to celebrate the historic milestone.

IPL Watches LPG Crisis Before Season Kick-off

CHENNAI

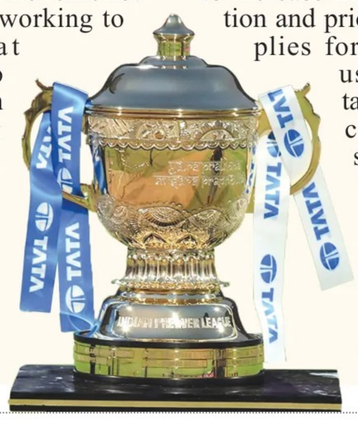
Energy crisis sparks concerns over logistics and operations for upcoming IPL season.

The Indian Premier League (IPL) is closely monitoring the ongoing LPG supply constraints triggered by the escalating war in West Asia, with IPL Governing Council Chairperson Arun Dhumal stating that authorities are reviewing the evolving situation ahead of the tournament's scheduled start on March 28.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and IPL organisers are keeping a close watch on developments after the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas announced that domestic LPG supplies are being prioritised due to fuel supply disruptions linked to the continuing West Asia conflict involving the United States, Israel and Iran.

Speaking to media, Dhumal said the league management is carefully assessing the impact of the crisis. "We are reviewing the developments. Since this is an evolving situation, nothing can be said as of now. But given the requirement of the situation, we will take a call accordingly," he said.

The IPL schedule is yet to be officially released, though the tournament is expected to begin on March 28. The cricket board is also working to ensure that matches do not clash with upcoming elections in several states. However, officials acknowledge that if the supply crisis worsens, it could affect not only the league but also sectors such as hospitality, healthcare and education.



Hotel associations in cities including Bengaluru and Chennai have already warned of dwindling LPG stocks, with many establishments reporting supplies sufficient for only a day or two. Some restaurants and hotels have begun limiting their menus to conserve fuel. Franchises have nevertheless begun preparations for the new season. The Chennai Super Kings have started training sessions at their high-performance centre, with around ten players attending daily camps. Similarly, the Punjab Kings squad has been training in Dharamsala over the past few days.

Apart from fuel availability, logistics could also pose challenges.

During the recently concluded ICC Men's T20 World Cup, several teams faced travel disruptions due to restricted air routes linked to the West Asia conflict. To mitigate the shortage, the Petroleum Ministry has directed refineries to increase LPG production and prioritise supplies for domestic use, hospitals and educational institutions while reviewing requests from hotels and other industries.

Shako Bentinidis Eyes Return as India's Men's Freestyle Wrestling Coach

CHENNAI

Georgian coach Shako Bentinidis, who earlier guided India's star grappler Bajrang Punia to major international successes, has expressed interest in returning to India as the foreign coach of the men's freestyle wrestling team.

Sources confirmed that Bentinidis has already sent his resume to the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI), which had invited applications from foreign coaches last year to strengthen the national programme ahead of major international competitions. His application will now be forwarded to the Sports Authority of India (SAI) for screening before the final round of interviews is conducted jointly by the two bodies.

Bentinidis previously worked closely with Punia during one of the most successful phases of the wrestler's career. Under his guidance, Punia won a medal at the 2018 Asian Games, secured bronze at the 2019 World Wrestling Championships and qualified for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, where he eventually clinched a bronze medal. The coach and wrestler parted ways in late 2021 after a productive partnership.

Apart from Bentinidis, two other international coaches have also applied for positions with the Indian wrestling setup. American coach Ian Butler has shown interest in training the women's wrestling team, while Iran's Saeid Abbaszadeh is keen to take charge of the men's Greco-Roman category.

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Indian Basketball Team Returns Home After 10-Day Ordeal Amid West Asia Conflict

CHENNAI

Players finally return after travel disruption caused by escalating war in West Asia

The senior Indian men's basketball team, stranded in Qatar for nearly ten days due to escalating tensions in West Asia, finally returned home early Tuesday after a complex journey arranged with the support of multiple authorities.

The players had been stuck in Doha after the outbreak of the West Asia conflict involving the United States, Israel and Iran led to widespread airspace restrictions across several countries in the region. With flights limited and travel routes disrupted, the team had to take an alternative road journey before catching flights back to India.

According to the Basketball Federation of India (BFI), the squad travelled by road from Doha to Dammam on Sunday, a journey that took approximately six hours. From there, due to limited flight availability, the team split into two groups to return home.

"One group travelled from Dammam to Jeddah and then to Mumbai, landing shortly after midnight on Tuesday, while the other group flew from Dammam to Lucknow, arriving early in the morning," the federation said in a social media update.

BFI secretary general Kulvinder Singh Gill confirmed the safe return of the players and thanked several organisations for facilitating the arrangements. He said the Qatar Basketball Federation and FIBA Asia played key roles in organising transportation from Doha to Saudi Arabia. The team also received support from the Indian Embassy in Qatar and the Ministry of External Affairs during the crisis.

The Indian squad had travelled to Doha to face Qatar in a qualifier for the FIBA Basketball World Cup on February 28. India lost the match 73–99. However, the conflict in West Asia escalated soon after, forcing several countries to close their airspace and disrupting international travel.

As a result, India's scheduled match against Lebanon national basketball team on March 3 in Zouk Mikael was postponed. The game is now expected to be played during the next qualification window in June.Several other Indian athletes also faced travel disruptions during the crisis, highlighting the wider impact of the ongoing geopolitical tensions on international sporting schedules and athlete mobility.

Ramit Tandon Ready for Fresh Start Ahead of Crucial Year in Squash

CHENNAI

Indian squash player Ramit Tandon is preparing to unveil a renewed version of himself as he gears up for a crucial season in 2026, beginning with the JSW Indian Open scheduled to start in Mumbai on March 18.

The 33-year-old from Kolkata endured a challenging 2025 season despite beginning the year on a high note. Tandon achieved a career-best ranking of No. 28 on the Professional Squash Association (PSA) tour before slipping to around 40 by November after a series of early exits in tournaments.

However, the experienced player believes the difficult season was part of a deliberate strategy to improve his level by regularly competing against top-ranked opponents.

Tandon explained that he and his support team had reassessed his approach, focusing less on merely qualifying for tournaments and more on challenging elite players.

According to Tandon, the goal now is to consistently push top-10 players and register significant wins rather than simply making the latter rounds of competitions.

As part of this plan, he has also attempted to better balance his training and competition schedule to allow more time for recovery and preparation.

Despite the dip in ranking, Tandon feels his performances have been encouraging. In recent tournaments he has reached quarterfinals at bronze and silver-level PSA events, defeated a pla yer ranked in the top 20 and pushed a top-10 opponent to a close contest.

IOC Award for Bhattacharya's Assam Volleyball Mission

WELLINGTON

Indian volleyball figure Abhijit Bhattacharya has been honoured with the prestigious 2025 Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champions Award by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for his transformative grassroots initiatives promoting inclusivity and gender equality in sports across Assam.

Bhattacharya, a former captain of the India men's national volleyball team, received the recognition for pioneering community-based programmes that have significantly expanded access to sports for children, particularly girls, in rural and under-served areas of the northeastern state. The award recognises his initiatives — Assam Volleyball Mission 100 (AVM100) and the Brahmaputra Volleyball League (BVL). What began as a modest effort to distribute 100 volleyballs to villages in 2019 has now grown into a large grassroots movement involving more than 12,000 children across 400 teams. According to the IOC, the initiatives were selected because of their strong focus on inclusivity and equal opportunities for boys and girls. "Through these initiatives, Bhattacharya championed gender equality and social development by ensuring equal participation for girls and boys and bringing sport directly into villages," the IOC said in a statement. Launched in 2020, the Brahmaputra Volleyball League has evolved into one of the largest community-based grassroots leagues in the world. More than 750 matches are broadcast each season without gender distinction, providing equal visibility to girls' and boys' teams. The league also encourages local youth to participate in match production, live streaming and digital storytelling, helping them gain valuable skills beyond the playing field.

The initiative has also received support from UNICEF, which has helped train 90 community ambassadors — 45 girls and 45 boys — to advocate for gender equality, education and social responsibility within their communities.

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